

THE
RAMBLER.

VOLUME THE FIFTH.

*Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri,
Quo me cunque rapit tempestas, deferor hospes.*

HOR.

L O N D O N:

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R A M B L E R

W O L F E

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THE
RAMBLER.

NUMB. 137. TUESDAY, July 9, 1751.

Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt.
HOR.

THAT wonder is the effect of ignorance, has been often observed. The awful stilness of attention, with which the mind is overspread at the first view of an unexpected effect or uncommon performance, ceases when we have leisure to disentangle complications and investigate causes. Wonder is a pause of reason, a sudden cessation of the mental progress, which lasts only while the understanding is fixed upon some single Idea; and is at an end when it recovers force enough to divide the object into its parts, or mark the intermediate gradations from the first motive to the last consequence.

IT may be remarked with equal truth, that ignorance is often the effect of wonder. It is common for those who have never ac-
VOL. V. B custom-

2 The RAMBLER. N° 137.

customed themselves to the labour of enquiry, nor invigorated their confidence by any conquests over difficulty, to sleep in the gloomy quiescence of astonishment, without any effort to animate languor or dispel obscurity. What they cannot immediately conceive, they consider as too high to be reached, or too extensive to be comprehended; They therefore content themselves with the gaze of ignorance, and forbearing to attempt what they have no hopes of performing, resign the pleasure of rational contemplation to more pertinacious study or more active faculties.

AMONG the productions of mechanic art, many are of a form so different from that of their first materials, and many consist of parts so numerous and so nicely adapted to each other, that it is not possible to consider them without amazement. But when we enter the shops of artificers, observe the various tools by which every operation is facilitated, and trace the progress of a manufacture through the different hands that in succession to each other, contribute to its perfection, we soon discover that every single man has an easy task, and that the extremes however remote

remote of natural rudeness and artificial elegance, are joined by a regular concatenation of effects, of which every one is introduced by that which precedes it, and equally introduces that which is to follow.

THE same is the state of intellectual and manual performances. A long calculation or a complex diagram affrights the timorous and unexperienced from a second view; but if we have skill sufficient to analyse them into simple principles, it will generally be discovered that our fear was groundless. *Divide and conquer*, is a principle equally just in science as in policy. Complication is a species of confederacy, which, while it continues united, bids defiance to the most active and vigorous intellect; but of which every member is separately weak, and which may therefore be quickly subdued if it can once be broken.

THE chief art of learning, as *Locke* has observed, is to attempt but little at a time. The farthest excursions of the mind are made by short flights frequently repeated, the most lofty fabricks of science are formed by the

4 **THE RAMBLER. N° 137.**

continued accumulation of single propositions.

It often happens, whatever be the cause, that this impatience of labour or dread of miscarriage, seizes those who are most distinguished for quickness of apprehension; and that they who might with greatest reason promise themselves victory, are least willing to hazard the encounter. This diffidence, where the attention is not laid asleep by laziness or dissipated by pleasures, can arise only from confused and general views such as negligence snatches in haste, or from the disappointment of the first hopes formed by arrogance without reflection. To expect that the intricacies of science will be pierced by a careless glance, or the eminences of fame ascended without labour, is to expect a peculiar privilege, a power denied to the rest of Mankind; but to suppose that the maze is inscrutable to diligence, or the heights inaccessible to perseverance, is to submit tamely to the tyranny of fancy, and enchain the mind in voluntary shackles.

It is the proper ambition of the Heroes in literature to enlarge the boundaries of knowledge

ledge by discovering and conquering new regions of the intellectual world. To the success of such undertakings perhaps some degree of fortuitous happiness is necessary, which no man can promise or procure to himself; and therefore doubt and irresolution may be forgiven in him that ventures into the untrodden abysses of truth, and attempts to find his way through the fluctuations of uncertainty, and the conflicts of contradiction. But when nothing more is required, than to pursue a path already beaten, and to trample obstacles which others have demolished, why should any man so much suspect his own intellect as to imagine himself unequal to the attempt?

It were to be wished that they who devote their lives to study would at once believe nothing too great for their attainment, and consider nothing as too little for their regard; that they would extend their notice alike to science and to life, and unite some knowledge of the present world to their acquaintance with past ages and remote events.

NOTHING has so much exposed Men of learning to contempt and ridicule, as their ig-

6 The RAMBLER. N^o 137.

norance of things which are known to all but themselves, and their inability to conduct common negotiations, or extricate their affairs from trivial perplexities. Those who have been taught to consider the institutions of the schools, as giving the last perfection to human abilities, are surprised to see men wrinkled with study, yet wanting to be instructed in the minute circumstances of propriety, or the necessary forms of daily transacti-
on; and quickly shake off their reverence for modes of education, which they find to produce no ability above the rest of mankind.

BOOKS, says Bacon, can never teach the use of books. The student must learn by commerce with mankind to reduce his speculations to practice, and accommodate his knowledge to the purposes of life.

It is too common for those who have been bred to scholastic professions and passed much of their time in academies where nothing but learning confers honours, to disregard every other qualification, and to imagine that they shall find mankind ready to pay homage

N^o 137. The RAMBLER. 7

mage to their knowledge, and to croud about them for instruction. They, therefore, step out from their cells into the open world, with all the confidence of authority and dignity of importance; they look round about them at once with ignorance and scorn on a race of beings to whom they are equally unknown and equally contemptible, but whose manners they must imitate, and with whose opinions they must comply, if they desire to pass their time happily among them.

To lessen that disdain with which scholars are inclined to look on the common business of the world, and the unwillingness with which they condescend to learn what is not to be found in any system of philosophy, it may be necessary to consider that though admiration is excited by abstruse researches and remote discoveries, we cannot hope to give pleasure, or to conciliate affection, but by softer accomplishments, and by qualities more easily communicable to those about us. He that can only converse upon questions, about which only a small part of mankind has knowledge sufficient to be curious, must

6 The RAMBLER. N^o 137.

his days in unsocial silence, and live in the crowd of life without a companion. He that can only be useful in great occasions, may die without exerting his abilities, and stand a helpless spectator of a thousand vexations which fret away the happiness of being, and which nothing is required to remove but a little dexterity of conduct and readiness of expedients.

No degree of knowledge attainable by man is able to set him above the want of hourly assistance, or to extinguish the desire of fond endearments, and tender officiousness; and therefore, no one should think it unnecessary to learn those arts by which friendship may be gained. Kindness is preserved by a constant reciprocation of benefits or interchange of pleasures; but such benefits only can be bestowed, as others are capable to receive, and such pleasures only imparted, as others are qualified to enjoy.

By this descent from the pinacles of art no honour will be lost; for the condescensions of learning are always overpaid by gratitude. An elevated genius employed in little things,

N^o 137. THE RAMBLER. 9

things, appears, to use the simile of *Longinus*, like the sun in his evening declination, he remits his splendor but retains his magnitude, and pleases more, though he dazzles less.

—————

NUMB. 138. SATURDAY, July 13, 1751.

—*tantum libeat Mihi sordida vira
Atque humiles habitare casas, et figere curvas.*
VIRG.

To the RAMBLER.

SIR,
THOUGH I cannot deny that the contempt with which you have treated the annual migrations of the gay and busy part of mankind, is justified by daily observation, since most of those who leave the town, neither vary their entertainments nor enlarge their notions; yet I suppose you do not intend to represent the practice itself as ridiculous, or to declare that he whose condition puts the distribution of his time into his own power, may not properly divide it between the town and country.

B. 5

THAT

THAT the country, and only the country displays the inexhaustible varieties of nature, and supplies the philosophical mind with matter for admiration and enquiry, never was denied ; but my curiosity is very little attracted by the colour of a flower, the anatomy of an insect, or the the structure of a nest ; my attention is generally employed upon human manners, and I therefore fill up the months of rural leisure with remarks on those who live within the circle of my notice. If Writers would more frequently visit those regions of negligence and liberty, they might often diversify their representations, and multiply their images, for in the country are original characters chiefly to be found. In cities, and yet more in courts, the minute discriminations which distinguish one from another are for the most part effaced, the peculiarities of temper and opinion are gradually worn away by promiscuous converse, as angular bodies and uneven surfaces lose their points and asperities by frequent attrition against one another, and approach by degrees to uniform rotundity. The prevalence of fashion, the influence of example, the desire
of

N^o 138. The RAMBLER. 11

of applause, and the dread of censure, obstruct the natural tendencies of the mind, and check the fancy in its first efforts to break forth into experiments of caprice.

Few inclinations are so strong as to grow up into habits, when they must struggle with the constant opposition of settled forms and established customs. But in the country every man is a separate and independent being; solitude flatters irregularity with hopes of secrecy; and wealth removed from the mortification of comparison and the awe of equality, swells into contemptuous confidence, and sets blame and laughter at defiance; the impulses of nature act unrestrained, and the disposition dares to shew itself in its true form, without any disguise of hypocrisy, or decorations of elegance. Every one indulges the full enjoyment of his own choice, and talks and lives with no other view than to please himself, without enquiring how far he deviates from the general practice, or considering others as entitled to any account of his sentiments or actions. If he builds or demolishes, opens or encloses, deluges or drains, it is not his care what may be the
opinion

12 The RAMBLER. N^o 138.

opinion of those who are skilled in perspective or architecture, it is sufficient that he has no landlord to control him, and that none has any right to examine in what projects the lord of the manor spends his own money on his own grounds?

For this reason it is not very common to want subjects for rural conversation. Almost every man is daily doing something which produces merriment, wonder or resentment, among his neighbours. This utter exemption from restraint leaves every anomalous quality to operate in its full extent, and suffers the natural character to diffuse itself to every part of life. The pride which under the check of publick observation would have been only vented among servants and domesticks, becomes in a country baronet the torment of a province, and instead of terminating in the destruction of china ware and glasses, ruins tenants, dispossesses cottagers, and harrasses villages with actions of trespass and bills of indictment.

It frequently happens that even without violent passions or enormous corruption the
freedom

N^o. 138. THE RAMBLER. 13

freedom and laxity of a rustick life produces remarkable particularities of conduct or manner. In the province where I now reside, we have one lady eminent for wearing a gown always of the same cut and colour; another for shaking hands with those that visit her; and a third for unshaken resolution never to let tea or coffee enter her house.

BUT of all the female characters which this place affords, I have found none so worthy of attention as that of Mrs. *Busby*, a widow, who lost her husband in her thirtieth year, and has since passed her time at the manor-house, in the government of her children, and the management of the estate.*

Mrs. *Busby* was married at eighteen from a boarding-school, where she had passed her time like other young ladies in needle-work, with a few intervals of dancing and reading. When she became a bride she spent one winter with her husband in town, where, having no idea of any conversation beyond the formalities of a visit, she found nothing to engage her passions; and when she had been one night at court, and two at an opera, and seen
the

the Monument, the tombs, and the Tower, she concluded that *London* had nothing more to show, and wondered that when women had once seen the world, they could not be content to stay at home. She therefore went willingly to the antient seat, and for some years studied housewifery under Mr. *Busby's* mother, with so much assiduity, that the old lady, when she died, bequeathed her a caudle-cup, a soup-dish, two beakers, and a chest of table linen spun by herself.

MR. *Busby* finding the economical qualities of his lady, resigned his affairs wholly into her hands, and devoted his life to his pointers and his hounds. He never visited his estates, but to destroy the partridges or foxes; and often committed such devastations in the rage of pleasure, that some of his tenants refused to hold their lands at the usual rent. Their landlady persuaded them to be satisfied, and entreated her husband to dismiss his dogs, with many exact calculations of the ale drank by his companions, and the corn consumed by the horses, and remonstrances against the insolence of the huntsman, and the frauds of the groom.

The

The huntsman was too necessary to his happiness to be discarded; and he had still continued to ravage his own estate, had he not caught a cold and a fever by shooting mallards in the fens. His fever was followed by a consumption, which in a few months brought him to the grave.

Mrs. *Busby* was too much an economist to feel either joy or sorrow at his death. She received the compliments and consolations of her neighbours in a dark room, out of which she stole privately every night and morning to see the cows milked; and after a few days declared that she thought a widow might employ herself better than in nursing grief, and that, for her part, she was resolved that the fortunes of her children should not be impaired by her neglect.

SHE therefore immediately applied herself to the reformation of abuses. She gave away the dogs, discharged the servants of the kennel and stable, and sent the horses to the next fair, but rated at so high a price that they returned unsold. She was resolved to have nothing idle about her, and ordered them to
be

46 The RAMBLER. N^o. 138.

be employed in common drudgery. They lost their sleekness and grace, and were soon purchased at half the value.

SHE soon disencumbered herself from her weeds, and put on a riding-hood, a coarse Apron, and short petticoats, and has turned a large manor into a farm, of which she takes the management wholly upon herself. She rises before the sun to order the horses to their geers, and sees them well rubbed down at their return from work; she attends the dairy morning and evening, and watches when a calf falls that it may be carefully nursed; she walks out among the sheep at noon, counts the lambs, and observes the fences, and, where she finds a gap, stops it with a bush till it can be better mended. In harvest she rides afield in the Waggon, and is very liberal of her ale from a wooden bottle. At her leisure hours she looks goose eggs, airs the wool room, and turns the cheese.

EITHER respect or curiosity still brings visitants to her house, whom she entertains with prognosticks of a scarcity of wheat, or not among the sheep, and whom she always thinks

N^o. 138. The RAMBLER. 17

thinks herself privileged to dismiss, when she is to see the hogs feed, or to count her poultry on the roost.

THE only things neglected about her are her children, whom she has taught nothing but the lowest household duties. In my last visit I met miss *Busy* carrying grains to a sick cow, and was entertained with the accomplishments of her elder son, a youth of such early maturity, that though he is only sixteen, she can trust him to sell corn in the market. Her younger daughter who is eminent for her beauty, though somewhat tanned in making hay, was busy in pouring out ale to the plowmen, that every one might have an equal share.

I COULD not but look with pity on this young family, doomed by the absurd prudence of their mother to ignorance and meanness; but when I recommended a more elegant education, was answered, that she never saw bookish or finical people grow rich, and that she was good for nothing herself till she had forgotten the nicety of the boarding-school.

I am,

Yours, &c.

BUCOLUS.

18 The RAMBLER. N^o. 139.

NUMB. 139. TUESDAY, July 16, 1751.

— *Sit quod vis simplex duntaxat et unum.*

HOR.

The RAMBLER.

IT is required by *Aristotle* to the perfection of a tragedy, and is equally necessary to every other species of regular composition, that it should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. "The beginning," says he "is that which has nothing necessarily previous but to which that which follows is naturally consequent; the end, on the contrary, is that which by necessity, or, at least, according to the common course of things, succeeds something else, but which implies nothing consequent to itself; the middle is connected on one side to something that naturally goes before, and on the other to something that naturally follows it."

SUCH is the rule laid down by this great critick, for the disposition of the different parts of a well constituted fable. It must
begin

Nº. 139. The RAMBLER. 19

begin, where it may be made intelligible without introduction; and end, where the mind is left in repose, without expectation of any farther event. The intermediate passages must join the last effect to the first cause, by a regular and unbroken concatenation; nothing must be therefore inserted which does not apparently arise from something foregoing, and properly make way for something that succeeds it.

THIS Precept is to be understood in its rigour, only with respect to great and essential events, and cannot be extended in the same force to minuter circumstances and unessential decorations, which yet are more happy as they contribute more to the main design; for it is always a proof of extensive thought and accurate circumspection, to promote various purposes by the same act; and the idea of an ornament admits use, though it seems to exclude necessity.

WHOEVER purposes, as it is expressed by *Milton*, to build the lofty rhyme, must acquaint himself with this law of poetical architecture, and take care that his edifice be solid as well

as beautiful; that nothing stand single or independent so as that it may be taken away without injuring the rest; but that from the foundation to the pinnacles one part rest firm upon another.

THIS regular and consequential distribution, is among common authors frequently neglected; but the failures of those, whose example can have no influence, may be safely overlooked, nor is it of much use to recall obscure and unregarded names to memory for the sake of sporting with their Infamy. But if there is any writer whose genius can embellish impropriety, and whose authority can make error venerable, his works are the proper objects of critical inquisition. To expunge faults where there are no excellencies, is a task equally useless with that of the chemist, who employs the arts of separation and refinement upon ore in which no precious metal is contained to reward his operations.

THE tragedy of *Samson Agonistes* has been celebrated as the second performance of the great author of *Paradise lost*, and opposed with all the confidence of triumph to the dramatick per-

N°. 139. The RAMBLER. 21

performances of other nations. It contains indeed just sentiments, maxims of wisdom, and oracles of piety, and many passages written with the antient spirit of choral poetry, in which there is a just and pleasing mixture of *Seneca's* moral declamation with the wild enthusiasm of the *Greek* writers. It is therefore worthy of examination, whether a performance thus illuminated with genius, and enriched with learning, is composed according to the indispensable laws of *Aristotelian* criticism; and, omitting at present all other considerations, whether it contains a beginning, a middle, and an end;

THE beginning is undoubtedly beautiful and proper, opening with a graceful abruptness, and proceeding naturally to a mournful recital of facts necessary to be known.

Samson. A little onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little farther on;
For yonder bank hath choice of sun and shade;
There I am wont to sit when any chance
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,
Daily in the common prison else enjoin'd
me.——

22 The RAMBLER. N°. 139.

—O wherefore was my birth from heav'n
foretold

Twice by an angel? —

—Why was my breeding order'd and prescrib'd,

As of a person separate to God,

Design'd for great exploits; if I must die

Betray'd, captiv'd, and both my eyes put out?

—Whom have I to complain of but myself?

Who this high gift of strength, committed to
me,

In what part lodg'd, how easily bereft me,

Under the seat of silence could not keep,

But weakly to a woman must reveal it.

His soliloquy is interrupted by a chorus or company of men of his own tribe, who condole his miseries, extenuate his fault, and conclude with a solemn vindication of divine justice. So that at the conclusion of the first act there is no design laid, no discovery made, nor any disposition formed towards the subsequent event.

In the second act *Manoah*, the father of *Samson*, comes to seek his son, and, being shown him by the chorus, breaks out into lamentations of his misery, and comparisons
of

N^o. 139: The RAMBLER. 23

of his present with his former state, representing to him the ignominy which his religion suffers, by the festival this day celebrated in honour of *Dagon*, to whom the idolaters ascribed his overthrow.

—— Thou bear'st

Enough, and more, the burthen of that fault;
Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains,
This day the *Philistines* a pop'lar feast
Here celebrate in *Gaza*; and proclaim
Great pomp and sacrifice, and praises loud
To *Dagon*, as their God, who hath deliver'd
Thee, *Samson*, bound and blind into their
hands,
Them out of thine, who slew'st them many
a slain.

Samson, touched with this reproach, makes
a reply equally penitential and pious, which
his father considers as the effusion of prophetick
confidence,

Samson ————— God be sure,
Will not connive or linger thus provok'd,
But will arise and his great name assert:
Dagon must stoop, and shall e'er long receive
Such

24 The RAMBLER. N°. 139.

Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him
Of all these boasted trophies won on me.

Manoah. With cause this hope relieves thee,
and these words

I as a prophecy receive; for God,
Nothing more certain, will not long defer
To vindicate the glory of his name.

THIS part of the dialogue, as it might tend to animate or exasperate *Samson*, cannot, I think, be censured as wholly superfluous; but the succeeding dispute, in which *Samson* contends to die, and which his father breaks off, that he may go to solicit his release, is only valuable for its own beauties, and has no tendency to introduce any thing that follows it.

THE next event of the drama is the arrival of *Dalilah*, with all her graces, artifices, and allurements. This produces a dialogue, in a very high degree elegant and instructive, from which she retires, after she has exhausted her persuasions, and is no more seen or heard of; nor has her visit any effect but that of raising the character of *Samson*.

Nº. 139. The RAMBLER. 25

IN the fourth act enters *Harapha* the giant of *Gath*, whose name had never been mentioned before, and who has now no other motive of coming than to see the man whose strength and actions are so loudly celebrated.

Harapha.]———Much I have heard
Of thy prodigious might, and feats perform'd,
Incredible to me ; in this displeas'd,
That I was never present in the place
Of those encounters, where we might have
tried
Each others force in camp or list'd fields :
And now am come to see of whom such
noise
Hath walk'd about, and each limb to survey,
If thy appearance answer loud report.

Samson challenges him to the combat, and after an interchange of reproaches, elevated by repeated defiance on one side, and im-bittered by contemptuous insults on the other, *Harapha* retires ; we then hear it determined, by *Samson* and the chorus, that no consequence good or bad will proceed from their interview.

C

Chorus

26 The RAMBLER. N^o. 139.

Chorus. He will directly to the lords, I fear,
And with malicious counsel stir them up
Some way or other farther to afflict thee.

Samson. He must allege some cause, and offer'd fight

Will not dare mention, lest a question rise,
Whether he durst accept the offer or not;
And that he durst not, plain enough appear'd.

AT last, in the fifth act, appears a messenger from the lords assembled at the festival of *Dagon*, with a summons, by which *Samson* is required to come and entertain them with some proof of his strength. *Samson*, after a short expostulation, dismisses him with a firm and resolute refusal, but during the absence of the messenger, having a while defended the propriety of his conduct, he at last declares himself moved by a secret impulse to comply, and utters some dark presages of a great event to be brought to pass by his agency under the direction of providence.

Samson. Be of good courage; I begin to feel

Some rousing motions in me, which dispose
To

To something extraordinary my thoughts.
 I with this messenger will go along,
 Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour
 Our law, or stain my vow of nazarite,
 If there be ought of presage in the mind,
 This day will be remarkable in my life
 By some great act, or of my days the last.

WHILE *Samson* is conducted off by the messenger, his father returns with hopes of success in his sollicitation, upon which he confers with the chorus till their dialogue is interrupted, first by a shout of triumph, and afterwards by screams of horror and agony. As they stand deliberating where they shall be secure, a man who had been present at the show enters, and relates how *Samson* having prevailed on his guide to suffer him to lean against the main pillars of the theatrical edifice, tore down the roof upon the spectators and himself.

———— Those two massy pillars
 With horrible confusion to and fro,
 He tugg'd, he took, till down they came
 and drew

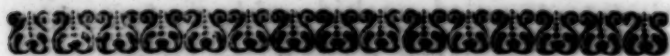
28 The RAMBLER. N°. 139.

The whole roof after them, with burst of
thunder,

Upon the heads of all who sat beneath.—

—*Samson* with these immixt, inevitably
Pull'd down the same destruction on himself.

THIS is undoubtedly a just and regular catastrophe, and the poem, therefore, has a beginning and an end which *Aristotle* himself could not have disapproved; but it must be allowed to want a middle, since nothing passes between the first act and the last, that either hastens or delays the death of *Samson*. The whole drama, if its superfluities were cut off, would scarcely fill a single act; yet this is the tragedy which ignorance has admired, and bigotry applauded.



The RAMBLER.

NUMB. 140. SATURDAY, July 20, 1751.

—*Quis tam, Lucili fautor inepte est
Ut non hoc fateatur.*

HOR.

IT is common, says *Bacon*, to desire the
end without enduring the means. Every
member

N^o. 140. The RAMBLER. 29

member of society feels and acknowledges the necessity of detecting crimes, yet scarce any degree of virtue or reputation is able to secure an informer from publick hatred. The learned world has always admitted the usefulness of critical disquisitions, yet he that attempts to show, however modestly, the failures of a celebrated writer, shall surely irritate his admirers, and incur the imputation of envy, captiousness, and malignity.

WITH this danger full in my view, I shall proceed to examine the sentiments of *Milton's* tragedy, which, though much less liable to censure than the disposition of his plan, are like those of other writers, sometimes exposed to just exception for want of care, or want of discernment.

SENTIMENTS are proper and improper as they consist more or less with the character and circumstances of the person to whom they are attributed, with the rules of the composition in which they are found, or with the settled and unalterable nature of things.

IT is common among the tragick poets to introduce their persons alluding to events or opinions, of which they could not possibly have any knowledge. The barbarians of remote or newly discovered regions often display their skill in *European* learning. The god of love is mentioned in *Tamerlane* with all the familiarity of a *Roman* epigrammatist; and a late writer has put *Harvey's* doctrine of the circulation of the blood into the mouth of a *Turkish* statesman, who lived near two centuries before it was known even to philosophers or anatomists.

MILTON's learning, which acquainted him with the manners of the antient eastern nations, and his invention, which required no assistance from the common cant of poetry, have preserved him from frequent outrages of local or chronological propriety. Yet he has mentioned *Chalybean Steel*, of which it is not very likely that his chorus should have heard, and has made *Alp* the general name of a mountain, in a region where the *Alps* could scarcely be known.

No

No medicinal liquor can assuage,
Nor breath of cooling air from snowy *Alp*.

He has taught *Samson* the tales of *Circe* and
the *Sirens*, at which he apparently hints in
his colloquy with *Dalilah*.

I know thy trains,
Tho' dearly to my cost, thy gins and toils;
Thy fair *enchanted cup*, and *warbling charms*
No more on me have pow'r.

BUT the grossest error of this kind is the
solemn introduction of the phoenix in the
last scene, which is faulty, not only as it is
incongruous to the personage to whom it is as-
cribed, but as it is so evidently contrary to
reason and nature, that it ought never to be
mentioned but as a fable in any serious poem.

——— Virtue giv'n for lost
Deprest, and overthrown, as seem'd,
Like that self-begotten bird
In the *Arabian* woods embost
That no second knows nor third
And lay e'er while a holocaust,
From out her ashy womb now teem'd,

C 4

Revives

32 The RAMBLER. N°. 140.

Revives, reffourifhes, then vigorous moft
When moft unactive deem'd,
And tho' her body die, her fame furvives,
A fecular bird ages of lives.

ANOTHER fpecies of impropriety is the unfuitablenefs of thoughts to the general character of the poem. The ferioufnefs and folemnity of tragedy neceffarily rejects all pointed or epigrammatical expreffions, all remote conceits and oppofition of Ideas. *Samfon's* complaint is therefore too elaborate to be natural.

As in the land of darknefs, yet in light,
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And bury'd ; but O yet more miferable !
Myfelf my fepulchre, a moving grave
Bury'd yet not exempt
By privilege of death and burial
From worft of other evils, pains and wrongs.

ALL allufions to low and trivial objects with which contempt is ufually affociated are doubtlefs unfuitable to a fpecies of compofition which ought to be always awful though not always magnificent. The remark therefore

Nº. 140. The RAMBLER. 33

fore of the chorus on good and bad news seems to want elevation.

Monoab. A little stay will bring some notice
hither.

Chor. Of good or bad so great, of bad the
sooner;

For evil news *rides post*, while good news
baits.

BUT of all meanness that has least to plead
which is produced by mere verbal conceits,
which depending only upon sounds lose their
existence by the change of a syllable. Of
this kind is the following dialogue,

Chor. But had we best retire? I see a *storm*.

Samf. Fair days have oft contracted wind and
rain.

Chor. But this another kind of tempest brings.

Samf. Be less abstruse, my ridling days are
past.

Chor. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor
fear

The bait of honied words; a rougher tongue
Draws hitherward, I know him by his stride,
The Giant *Harapha*——

AND yet more despicable are the lines in which *Manoah's* paternal kindness is commended by the chorus

Fathers are wont to *lay up* for their sons
Thou for thy son are bent to *lay out* all ;—

SAMSON's complaint of the inconveniencies of imprisonment is not wholly without verbal quaintness.

— I a prisoner chain'd, scarce freely draw
The air imprison'd also, close and damp.

FROM the sentiments we may properly descend to the consideration of the language, which in imitation of the antients is through the whole dialogue remarkably simple and unadorned, seldom heightened by epithets, or varied by figures ; yet sometimes metaphors find admission, even where their consistency is not accurately preserved. Thus *Samson* confounds loquacity with a shipwreck.

How could I once look up, or heave the
head

Who

N^o. 140. The RAMBLER. 35

Who like a foolish *pilot* have *shipwreck'd*
My *vessel* trusted to me from above,
Gloriously *rigg'd*; and for a word, a tear,
Fool, have *divulg'd* the *secret* gift of God
To a deceitful woman?—

And the chorus talks of adding fuel to
flame in a report.

He's gone, and who knows how he may
report
Thy words, by *adding fuel to the flame*?

THE versification is in the dialogue much
more smooth and harmonious than in the
parts allotted to the chorus, which are often
so harsh and dissonant, as scarce to preserve,
whether the lines end with or without rhymes,
any appearance of metrical regularity,

Or do my eyes misrepresent? can this be he
That heroic, that renown'd,
Irresistable *Samson*; whom unarm'd
No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast
could withstand;
Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the
kid—

SINCE I have thus pointed out the faults of *Milton*, the laws of critical integrity require that I should endeavour to display his excellencies, tho' they will not easily be discovered in short quotations, because they consist in the justness of diffuse reasonings, or in the contexture and method of continued dialogues; this play having none of these descriptions, similes, or splendid sentences with which other tragedies are so lavishly adorned.

YET some passages may be selected which seem to deserve particular notice, either as containing sentiments of passion, representations of life, precepts of conduct, or fallies imagination. It is not easy to give a stronger representation of the weariness of despondency than in the words of *Samson* to his father.

— I feel my genial spirits droop,
My hopes all flat, nature within me seems
In all her functions weary of herself;
My race of glory run, and race of shame,
And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

THE

N^o. 140. The RAMBLER. 37

THE reply of *Samson* to the flattering *Dalilah* affords a just and striking description of the stratagems and allurements of feminine hypocrisy.

————— These are thy wonted arts,
And arts of ev'ry woman false like thee,
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,
Then as repentant to submit, beseech,
And reconciliation move with feign'd remorse,
Confess and promise wonders in her change ;
Not truly penitent, but chief to try
Her husband, how far urg'd his patience bears,
His virtue or weakness which way to assail :
Then with more cautious and instructed skill
Again transgresses, and again submits.

WHEN *Samson* has refused to make himself a spectacle at the feast of *Dagon*, he first justifies his behaviour to the chorus, who charge him with having served the *Philistines* by a very just distinction ; and then destroys the common excuse of cowardice and servility which always confound temptation with compulsion.

Chor.

38 The RAMBLER N^o. 140.

Chor. Yet with thy strength thou serv'st the
Philistines.

Samf. Not in their idol worship, but by labour

Honest and lawful to deserve my food
Of those who have me in their civil power.

Chor. Where the heart joins not, outward
acts defile not.

Samf. Where outward force constrains, the
sentence holds,

But who constrains me to the temple of *Dagon*,

Not dragging? The *Philistine* lords command.
Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
I do it freely, vent'ring to displease

God for the fear of man, and man prefer
Set God behind.

THE complaint of blindness which *Samson*
pours out at the beginning of the tragedy is
equally addressed to the passions and the
fancy. The enumeration of his miseries is
succeeded by a very pleasing train of poetical
images, and concluded by such expostu-
lations and wishes, as reason too often sub-
mits to learn from despair.

N^o. 140. The RAMBLER. 39

O first created beam, and thou great word
 Let there be light, and light was over all;
 Why am I thus bereav'd thy prime decree?
 The sun to me is dark
 And silent as the noon,
 When she deserts the night
 Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
 Since light so necessary is to life,
 And almost life itself; if it be true,
 That light is in the soul,
 She all in ev'ry part; why was the sight
 To such a tender ball as th' eye confin'd,
 So obvious and so easy to be quench'd,
 And not, as feeling, thro' all parts diffus'd,
 That she may look at will thro' ev'ry pore.

SUCH are the faults and such the beauties
 of *Samson Agonistes*, which I have shown
 with no other purpose than to promote the
 knowledge of true criticism. The everlast-
 ing verdure of *Milton's* laurels, has nothing
 to fear from the blasts of malignity; nor can
 my attempt produce any other effect, than
 to strengthen their shoots by lopping their
 luxuriance.

NUMB.

40 The RAMBLER. N^o. 141.

NUMB. 141. TUESDAY, July, 23, 1751.

Hilarisque, tamen cum pondere, virtus.

STAT.

To the RAMBLER.

S I R,

THE politicians have long observed that the greatest events may be often traced back to trivial causes. Petty competition or casual friendship, the prudence of a slave, or the garrulity of a woman have hindered or promoted the most important schemes, and hastened or retarded the revolutions of empire.

WHOEVER shall review his life will generally find, that the whole tenor of his conduct has been determined by some accident of no apparent moment, or by a combination of inconsiderable circumstances, acting when his imagination was unoccupied, and his judgment unsettled; and that his principles and actions have taken their colour from some secret infusion, mingled without design in the current of his ideas. The desires
that

that predominate in our hearts, are instilled by imperceptible communications at the time when we look upon the various scenes of the world, and the different employments of men, with the neutrality of inexperience; and we come forth from the nursery or the school, invariably destined to the pursuit of great acquisitions, or petty accomplishments.

SUCH was the impulse by which I have been kept in motion from my earliest years. I was born to an inheritance which gave me a claim in my childhood to distinction and caresses, and suppose therefore that I was accustomed to hear applauses, before they had much influence on my thoughts. The first praise of which I remember myself sensible was that of good humour, which, whether I deserved it or not when it was bestowed, I have since made it my whole business to propagate and maintain.

WHEN I was sent to school, the gaiety of my look and the liveliness of my loquacity soon gained me admission to young hearts not yet fortified against affection by artifice or interest. I was entrusted with every stratagem,

tagem, adopted into every party, and associated in every sport; my company gave alacrity to a frolick, and gladness to a holiday. I was indeed so much employed in adjusting or executing schemes of diversion that I had had no leisure for my tasks, but was always furnished with exercises, and instructed in my lessons by some kind patron of the higher classes. My master either not suspecting my deficiency, or unwilling to detect what his kindness would not have suffered him to punish nor his impartiality to excuse, commonly allowed me to escape with a very slight examination, laughed at the pertness of my ignorance, and the sprightliness of my absurdities, and could not forbear to show that he regarded me with such tenderness, as genius and learning can seldom excite.

From school I was at the usual age dismissed to the university, where I soon drew upon me the notice of the younger students, and was the constant partner of their morning walks and evening computations. I was not indeed much celebrated for literature, but was looked on with indulgence as a man of parts who wanted nothing but the dullness

N^o. 141. The RAMBLER. 43

ness of a scholar, and might become eminent, whenever he should condescend to labour and attention. My tutor a while reproached me with negligence, and attempted to repress my fallies with the superciliousness of lettered gravity; yet having natural good humour lurking in his heart, he could not long hold out against the power of hilarity, but after a few months began to relax the muscles of disciplinarian moroseness, received me with smiles after an elopement, and, that he might not betray his trust to his fondness, was content to spare my diligence by encreasing his own.

THUS I continued to dissipate the gloom of collegiate austerity, to waste my own life in idleness, and lure others from their studies, till the happy hour arrived, when in the regular progress of education, I was sent to *London*. I soon discovered the town to be the proper element of youth and gaiety. I was quickly distinguished as a wit by the ladies, a species of beings of whom I had only heard at the university, and whom I had no sooner the happiness of approaching than

44 The RAMBLER. N°. 141.

than I devoted all my faculties to the ambition of pleasing them.

A WIT, Mr. *Rambler*, in the dialect of ladies is not always a man, who by the action of a vigorous fancy upon comprehensive knowledge, brings distant ideas unexpectedly together, who by some peculiar acuteness discovers resemblances in objects dissimilar to common eyes, or by mixing heterogeneous notions dazzles the attention with sudden scintillations of conceit. A lady's wit is a man who can make ladies laugh, to which, however easy it may seem, many gifts of nature, and attainments of art must commonly concur. He that hopes to be received as a wit in female assemblies should have a form neither so amiable as to strike with admiration, nor so coarse as to raise disgust, with an understanding too feeble to be dreaded, and too forcible to be despised. The other parts of the character are more subject to variation; it was formerly essential to a wit, that half his back should be covered with a snowy fleece, and at a time yet more remote no man was a wit without his boots; in the days of the specta-
tor

tor a snuff-box seems to have been indispensable, but in my time an embroidered coat was sufficient, without any precise regulation of the rest of his dress.

BUT wigs and boots and snuff-boxes are vain without a perpetual resolution to be merry, and who can always find supplies of mirth? *Juvenal* indeed, in his comparison of the two opposite philosophers, wonders only whence an unexhausted fountain of tears could be discharged; but had *Juvenal*, with all his spirit, undertaken my province, he would have found constant gaiety equally difficult to be supported. Consider, Mr. *Rambler*, and compassionate the condition of a man who has taught every company to expect from him, a continual feast of laughter, an unintermitted stream of jocularities. The task of every other slave has an end. The rower in time reaches the port; the lexicographer at last finds the conclusion of his alphabet; only the hapless wit has his labour always to begin, the call for novelty is never satisfied, and one jest only raises expectation of another.

I KNOW that among men of learning and asperity the retainers to the female world are not considered with much regard; yet I cannot but hope that if you knew at how dear a rate our honours are purchased, you would look with some gratulation on our success, and with some pity on our miscarriages. Think on the misery of him who is condemned to cultivate barrenness, and romage vacuity; who is obliged to continue his talk when his meaning is spent, to raise merriment without images, to harass his imagination in quest of thoughts which he cannot start, and his memory in pursuit of narratives which he cannot overtake; observe the effort with which he strains to conceal despondency by a smile, and the distress in which he sits while the eyes of the company are fixed upon him as their last refuge from silence and dejection.

It were endless to recount the shifts to which I have been reduced, or to enumerate the different species of artificial wit. I regularly frequented coffee-houses, and have often lived a week upon an expression, of
which

N^o 141. The RAMBLER. 47

which he who dropped it did not know the value. When fortune did not favour my erratic industry, I gleaned jests at home from obsolete farces. To collect wit was indeed safe, for I consoled with none that looked much into books, but to disperse it was the difficulty. A seeming negligence was often useful, and I have very successfully made a reply not to what the lady had said, but to what it was convenient for me to hear; for very few were so perverse as to rectify a mistake which had given occasion to a burst of merriment. Sometimes I drew the conversation up by degrees to a proper point, and produced a conceit which I had treasured up, like sportsmen who boast of killing the foxes which they lodge in the covert. Eminence is however in some happy moments gained at less expence; I have delighted a whole circle at one time with a series of quibbles, and made myself good company at another by scalding my fingers, or mistaking a lady's lap for my own chair.

THESE are artful deceits and useful expedients; but expedients are at length exhausted, and deceits detected. Time itself,
among

48 The RAMBLER. N^o 141.

among other injuries, diminishes the power of pleasing, and I now find in my forty fifth year many pranks and pleasantries very coldly received which have formerly filled a whole room with jollity and acclamation. I am under the melancholy necessity of supporting that character by study, which I gained by levity, having learned too late that gaiety must be recommended by higher qualities, and that mirth can never please long but as the efflorescence of a mind loved for its luxuriance, but esteemed for its usefulness.

I am, &c.

PAPILIUS.

MUMB.

NUMB. 142. SATURDAY, July, 27, 1751.

Εἶθα δ' ἀνὴρ ἐνίαυε πελάριος---οὐδὲ, μέτ' ἄλλος
Πωλεῖτ'· ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθεν ἰὼν ἀθεμίγια ἦδη·
Καὶ γὰρ θαυμ' ἐτίτυκτο πελάριον, εἰδὲ ἐρκεῖ
Ἀνὴρ σιτοφάγῳ.

HOM.

To the RAMBLER.

S I R,

HAVING been long accustomed to retire annually from the town in the summer months, I lately accepted the invitation of *Eugenio*, who has an estate and seat in a distant county. As we were unwilling to travel without improvement, we turned often from the direct road to please ourselves with the view of nature or of art; we examined every wild mountain and medicinal spring, criticised every edifice, contemplated every ruin that was to be found on either hand, and compared every scene of action with the narratives of historians. By this succession of amusements we enjoyed the exercise of a journey without suffering the fatigue, and had nothing to regret but that by a progress so leisurely and gentle, we missed the adventures of a post-chaise, and the pleasure

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of

of alarming villages with the tumult of our passage, and of disguising our insignificancy by the dignity of hurry.

THE first week after our arrival at *Eugenio's* house was passed in receiving visits from his neighbours, who crowded about him with all the eagerness of benevolence; some impatient to learn the news of the Court and town, that they might be qualified by authentick information to dictate to the rural politicians on the next bowling day; others desirous of his interest to accommodate disputes, or of his advice in the settlement of their fortunes and the marriage of their children.

THE civilities which we had received were soon to be returned; and I passed some time with great satisfaction in roving through the country, and viewing the seats, gardens and plantations which are scattered over it. My pleasure would indeed have been greater had I been sometimes allowed to wander in a park or wilderness alone, but to appear as the friend of *Eugenio* was an honour not to be enjoyed without some inconveniences; so
much

much was every one solicitous for my regard, that I could seldom escape to solitude, or steal a moment from the emulation of complaisance, and the vigilance of officiousness.

IN these rambles of good neighbourhood we frequently passed by a house of unusual magnificence, which, while I had my curiosity yet distracted among many novelties, did not much attract my observation; but in a short time I could not forbear surveying it with particular notice; for the length of the wall which enclosed the gardens, the disposition of the shades that waved over it, and the canals, of which I could obtain some glimpses through the trees from our own windows, gave me reason to expect more grandeur and beauty than I had yet seen in that province. I therefore enquired as we rode by it, why we never amongst our excursions spent an hour where there was such appearance of splendor and affluence. *Eugenio* told me that the seat which I so much admired, was commonly called in the country the *haunted house*, and that no visits were paid there by any of the gentlemen whom I had yet seen. As the haunts of incorporeal

beings are generally ruinous, neglected and desolate, I easily conceived that there was something to be explained, and told him that I supposed it only fairy ground, on which we might venture by day-light without danger. The danger, says he, is indeed only that of appearing to solicit the acquaintance of a man, with whom it is not possible to converse without infamy, and who has driven from him by his insolence or malignity every human being who can live without him.

OUR conversation was then accidentally interrupted; but my inquisitive humour being now in motion, could not rest without a full account of this newly discovered prodigy. I was soon informed that the fine house and spacious gardens were haunted by squire *Bluster*, of whom it was very easy to learn the character, since nobody had regard for him sufficient to hinder them from telling whatever they could discover.

SQUIRE *Bluster* is descended of an antient family. The estate which his ancestors had immemorially possessed was much augmented
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by captain *Bluster*, who served under *Drake* in the reign of *Elizabeth*; and the *Blusters* who were before only petty gentlemen, have from that time frequently represented the shire in parliament, been chosen to present addresses, and given laws at hunting-matches and races. They were eminently hospitable and popular, till the father of this gentleman died of a fever, which he caught in the crowd of an election. His lady went to the grave soon after him, and left the heir then only ten years old to the care of his grandmother, who would not suffer him to be controlled, because she could not bear to hear him cry; and never sent him to school, because she was not able to live without his company. She taught him however very early to inspect the steward's accounts, to dog the butler from the cellar, and to catch the servants at a junket; so that he was at the age of eighteen a complete master of all the lower arts of domestick policy, had often on the road detected combinations between the coachman and the ostler, and procured the discharge of nineteen maids for illicit correspondence with cottagers and charwomen.

By the opportunities of parsimony which minority affords, and which the probity of his guardians had diligently improved, a very large sum of money was accumulated, and he found himself when he took his affairs into his own hands the richest man in the county. It has been long the custom of this family to celebrate the heir's completion of his twenty-first year, by an entertainment, at which the house is thrown open to all that are inclined to enter it, and the whole province flocks together as to a general festivity. On this occasion young *Bluster* exhibited the first tokens of his future eminence, by shaking his purse at an old gentleman, who had been the most intimate friend of his father, and offering to wager a greater sum than he could afford to venture; a practice with which he has at one time or other insulted every freeholder within ten miles round him.

His next acts of offence were committed in a contentious and spiteful vindication of the privileges of his manors, and a rigorous and relentless prosecution of every man that presumed to violate his game. As he happens

pens to have no estate adjoining equal to his own, his oppressions are often born without resistance for fear of a long suit, of which he delights to count the expences without the least solicitude about the event, for he knows that where nothing but an honorary right is contested, the poorer antagonist must always suffer whatever shall be the last decision of the law.

By the success of some of these disputes, he has so elated his insolence, and by reflection upon the general hatred which they have brought upon him, so irritated his virulence, that his whole life is spent in meditating or executing mischief. It is his common practice to procure his hedges to be broken in the night, and then to demand satisfaction for damages which his grounds have suffered from his neighbour's cattle. An old widow was yesterday soliciting *Eugenio* to enable her to replevin her only cow then in the pound by squire *Bluster*'s order, who had sent one of his agents to take advantage of her calamity, and persuade her to sell the cow at an under rate. He has driven a day labourer from his cottage, for gathering blackberries in a hedge for his children; and has now an

56 The RAMBLER. N°. 142.

old woman in the county jail for a trespass which she committed, by coming into his grounds to pick up acorns for her hog.

MONEY, in whatever hands, will confer power. Distress will fly to immediate refuge without much consideration of remote consequences. *Bluster* has therefore a despotick authority in many families whom he has assisted on pressing occasions with larger sums than they can easily repay. The only visits that he makes are to these houses of misfortune, where he enters with the insolence of absolute command, enjoys the terrors of the family, exacts their obedience, riots at their charge, and in the height of his joy insults the father with menaces, and the daughters with obscenity.

He is of late somewhat less offensive; for one of his debtors after gentle expostulations by which he was only irritated to grosser outrage, seized him by the sleeve, led him trembling into the court-yard, and closed the door upon him in a stormy night. He took his usual revenge next morning by a writ, but the debt was discharged by the assistance of *Eugenia*.

IT

N^o 142. The RAMBLER. 57

IT is his rule to suffer his tenants to owe him rent, because by this indulgence, he secures to himself the power of seizure whenever he has an inclination to amuse himself with calamity, and feast his ears with entreaties and lamentations. Yet as he is sometimes capriciously liberal to those whom he happens to adopt as favourites, and lets his lands at a cheap rate, his farms are never long unoccupied; and when one is ruined by oppression, the possibility of better fortune quickly lures another to supply his place.

SUCH is the life of squire *Bluster*; a man in whose power fortune has liberally placed the means of happiness, but who has defeated all her gifts of their end by the depravity of his mind. He is wealthy without followers; he is magnificent without witnesses; he has birth without alliance, and influence without dignity. His neighbours scorn him as a brute; his dependents dread him as an oppressor, and he has only the gloomy comfort of reflecting, that if he is hated, he is likewise feared.

I am, Sir, &c.

VAGULUS.

58 The RAMBLER. N^o. 143.

NUMB. 143. TUESDAY, July, 30, 1751.

—*Moveat Cornicula Risum*
Furtivis nudata Coloribus.—

HOR.

AMONG the innumerable practices by which interest or envy have taught those who live upon literary fame to disturb each other at their airy banquets, one of the most common is the charge of plagiarism. When the excellence of a new composition, can no longer be contested, and malice is compelled to give way to the unanimity of applause, there is yet this one expedient to be tried by which the author may be degraded, though his work be revered; and the excellence which we cannot obscure, may be set at such a distance as not to overpower our fainter lustre.

THIS accusation is dangerous, because, even when it is false, it may be sometimes urged with probability. *Bruyere* declares that we are come into the world too late to produce any thing new, that nature and life are

N^o. 143. The RAMBLER. 59

preoccupied, and that description and sentiment have been long exhausted. It is indeed certain that whoever attempts any common topick, will find many unexpected coincidences of his thoughts with those of other writers; nor can the nicest judgment always distinguish accidental similitude from artful imitation. There is likewise a common stock of images, a settled mode of arrangement, and a beaten track of transition, which all authors suppose themselves at liberty to use, and which produce the resemblance generally observable among contemporaries. So that in books which best deserve the name of originals, there is little new beyond the disposition of materials already provided; the same ideas and combinations of ideas have been long in the possession of other hands; and by restoring to every man his own, as the *Romans* must have returned to their cots from the possession of the world, so the most inventive and fertile genius would reduce his folios to a few pages. Yet the author who imitates his predecessors only, by furnishing himself with thoughts and elegancies out of the same general magazine of literature, can with little more propriety be reproached.

proached as a plagiarist, than the architect can be censured as a mean copier of *Angelo* or *Wren*, because he digs his marble from the same quarry, squares his stones by the same art, and unites them in columns of the same orders.

MANY subjects fall under the consideration of an author, which being limited by nature can admit only of slight and accidental diversities. All definitions of the same thing must be nearly the same; and descriptions, which are definitions of a more lax and fanciful kind, must always have in some degree that resemblance to each other which they all have to their object. Different poets describing the spring or the sea would mention the zephyrs and the flowers, the billows and the rocks; reflecting on human life, they would, without any communication of opinions, lament the deceitfulness of hope, the fugacity of pleasure, the fragility of beauty, and the frequency of calamity; and, for palliatives of these incurable miseries, they would concur in recommending kindness, temperance, caution and fortitude.

WHEN therefore there are found in *Virgil* and *Horace* two similar passages,

He

N^o. 143. The RAMBLER. 61

Hæ tibi erunt artes————

Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.—VIRG.

*Imperet bellante prior, jacentem
Lenis in hostem.*

HOR.

It is surely not necessary to suppose with a late critick that one is copied from the other, since neither *Virgil* nor *Horace* can be supposed ignorant of the common duties of humanity, and the virtue of moderation in success.

CICERO and *Ovid* have on very different occasions remarked how little of the honour of a victory can belong to the general, when his soldiers and his fortune have made their deductions; yet why should *Ovid* be suspected to have owed to *Tully* an observation, which perhaps occurs to every man that sees or hears of military glories.

TULLY observes of *Achilles*, that had not *Homer* written, his valour had been without praise. *Nisi ilias illa extitisset, idem tumulus qui corpus ejus contexerat, nomen ejus obruisset.* *Horace* tells us with more energy that
there

62 The RAMBLER. N^o. 143.

there were brave men before the wars of Troy, but they were lost in oblivion for want of a poet.

*Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
Multi; sed omnes illachrymabiles
Urgentur, ignotique longâ
Nocte, carent quia vate sacro.*

TULLY enquires, in the same oration, why, but for fame, we disturb a short life with so many fatigues? *Quid est quod in hoc tam exigue vitæ curriculo et tam brevi, tantis nos in laboribus exerceamus?* Horace enquires in the same manner,

*Quid brevi fortes jaculamur ævo
Multâ?*

When our life is of so short duration, why we form such numerous designs. But Horace, as well as Tully, might discover that records are needful to preserve the memory of actions, and that no records were so durable as poems; either might find out that life is short, and that we consume it in unnecessary labour.

THERE are other flowers of fiction so widely scattered and so easily cropped, that it

N^o. 143. THE RAMBLER. 63

is scarcely just to tax the use of them as an act by which any particular writer is despoiled of his garland; for they may be said to have been planted by the antients in the open road of poetry for the accommodation of their successors, and to be the right of every one that has art to pluck them without injuring their colours or their fragrance. The passage of *Orpheus* to hell, with the recovery and second loss of *Eurydice*, have been described after *Boetius* by *Pope*, in such a manner as might justly leave him suspected of imitation, were not the images such as they might both have derived from more antient writers.

*Quæ fontes agitant metus
Ultrices scelerum deæ
Jam mæstæ lacrimis madent,
Non Ixionium caput
Velox præcipitat rota.*

Thy stone, O *Sisyphus*, stands still,
Ixion rests upon his wheel,
And the pale spectres dance!
The furies sink upon their iron beds.
Tandem,

64 The RAMBLER. N°. 143.

*Tandem, vincimur, arbiter
Umbrarum, miserans, ait——
Donemus, comitem viro,
Emtam carmine, conjugem.*

He sung, and hell consented
To hear the poet's prayer ;
Stern *Proserpine* relented,
And gave him back the fair.

*Heu, noctis prope terminos
Orpheus Eurydicen suam
Vidit, perdidit, occidit.*

But soon, too soon, the lover turns his eyes :
Again she falls, again she dies, she dies !

No writer can be fully convicted of imitation except there is a concurrence of more resemblances than can be imagined to have happened by chance ; as where the same ideas are conjoined without any natural series or necessary coherence, or where not only the thought but the words are copied. Thus it can scarcely be doubted, that in the first of the following passages *Pope* remembred *Ovid*, and that in the second he copied *Crashaw*.

Sape

N° 143. The RAMBLER. 65

Sæpe pater dixit, studium quid inutile tentas?

Mæonides nullas ipse reliquit opes——

Sponte suâ carmen numeros veniebat ad aptos,

Et quod conabar scribere, versus erat. Ov.

I left no calling for this idle trade ;
No duty broke, no father disobey'd ;
While yet a child, ere yet a fool to fame,
I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came.
POPE

———This plain floor,
Believe me, reader, can say more
Than many a braver marble can,
Here lies a truly honest man. CRASHAW.

This modest stone, what few vain marbles
can,
May truly say, here lies an honest man.
POPE.

CONCEITS, or thoughts not immediately
impressed by sensible objects, or necessarily
arising from the coalition or comparison of
common sentiments, may be with great justice
suspected whenever they are found a second
time. Thus *Waller* probably owed to *Grotius*
an elegant compliment.

Hero

66 The RAMBLER. N^o 143.

Here lies the learned *Savil's* heir,
So early wise, and lasting fair;
That none, except her years they told,
Thought her a child, or thought her old.

WALLER.

*Unica lux sæcli, genitoris gloria, nemo
Quem puerum, nemo credidit esse senem.*

GROT.

AND *Prior* was indebted for a pretty illustration to *Alleyne's* poetical history of *Henry the seventh*.

For nought but light itself, itself can show,
And only kings can write, what kings can do.

ALLEYNE.

Your musick's power, your musick must
disclose,
For what light is, 'tis only light that shows.

PRIOR.

AND with yet more certainty may the same writer be censured, for endeavouring the clandestine appropriation of a thought which he borrowed, surely without thinking himself disgraced, from an epigram of *Plato*.

T^h

N^o. 143. The RAMBLER. 67

Τῇ Παφίῃ τὸ κάτοπτρον· ἔπει τοίη μὲν ὁρᾶσθαι
Οὐκ ἐθέλω, οἷα δ' ἦν πάρος, εἰ δύναμαι.

Venus take my votive glass;
Since I am not what I was;
What from this Day I shall be,
Venus let me never see.

As not every instance of similitude can be considered as a proof of imitation, so not every imitation ought to be stigmatized as plagiarism. The adoption of a noble sentiment, or the insertion of a borrowed ornament may sometimes display so much judgment as will almost compensate for invention; and an inferior genius may without any imputation of servility pursue the path of the antients, provided he declines to tread in their footsteps.

NUMB.

NUMB. 144. SATURDAY, August 3, 1751.

Daphnidis arcum

*Fregisti et calamos: quæ tu, perverse Menalca,
Et cum vidisti puero donata, dolebas;
Et si non aliqua nocuisses, mortuus esses, VIRG.*

IT is impossible to mingle in any conversation without observing the difficulty with which a new name makes its way into the world. The first appearance of excellence unites multitudes against it; unexpected opposition rises up on every side; the celebrated and the obscure join in the confederacy; subtilty furnishes arms to impudence, and invention leads on credulity.

THE strength and unanimity of this alliance is not easily conceived. It might be expected that no man should suffer his heart to be enflamed with malice, but by injuries; that none should busy himself in contesting the pretensions of another, but where some right of his own was involved in the question;

tion; that at least hostilities commenced without cause, should quickly cease; that the armies of malignity should soon disperse, when no common interest could be found to hold them together; and that the attack upon a rising character should be left entirely to those who had something to hope or fear from the event.

THE hazards of those that aspire to eminence would be much diminished if they had none but acknowledged rivals to encounter. Their enemies would then be few, and, what is of yet greater importance, would be known. But what caution is sufficient to ward off the blows of invisible assailants, or what force can stand against unintermitted attacks, and a continual succession of enemies? Yet such is the state of the world, that no sooner can any man emerge from the crowd, and fix the eyes of the publick upon him, than he stands as a mark to the arrows of lurking calumny, and receives, in the tumult of hostility, from distant and from nameless hands, wounds not always easy to be cured.

It is probable that the onset against the candidates for renown, is originally incited
by

by those who imagine themselves in danger of suffering by their success; but when war is once declared, volunteers flock to the standard, multitudes follow the camp only for want of employment, and flying squadrons are dispersed to every part, so pleased with an opportunity of mischief that they toil without prospect of praise, and pillage without hope of profit.

WHEN any man has endeavoured to deserve distinction, he may be easily convinced how long his claim is likely to remain unacknowledged, by wandering for a few days from one place of resort to another. He will be surprised to hear himself censured where he could not expect to have been named; he will find the utmost acrimony of malice among those whom he never could have offended, and perhaps may be invited to an association against himself, or appealed to as a witness of his own infamy.

As there are to be found in the service of envy men of every diversity of temper and degree of understanding, calumny is diffused by all arts and methods of propagation.
Nothing

Nothing is too gross or too refined, too cruel or too trifling to be practised; very little regard is had to the rules of honourable hostility, but every weapon is accounted lawful; and those that cannot make a thrust at life are content to keep themselves in play with petty malevolence, to teaze with feeble blows and impotent disturbance.

BUT as the industry of observation has divided the most miscellaneous and confused assemblages into proper classes, and ranged the insects of the summer, that torment us with their drones or stings, by their several tribes; the persecutors of merit, notwithstanding their number, may be likewise commodiously distinguished into roarers, whisperers, and moderators.

THE roarer is an enemy rather terrible than dangerous. He has no other qualifications for a champion of controversy than a hardened front and strong voice. Having seldom so much desire to confute as to silence, he depends rather upon vociferation than argument, and has very little care to adjust one part of his accusation to another, to preserve
decency

decency in his language or probability in his narratives. He has always a store of reproachful epithets and contemptuous appellations, ready to be produced as occasion may require, which by constant use he pours out with resistless volubility. If the wealth of a trader is mentioned, he without hesitation devotes him to bankruptcy; if the beauty and elegance of a lady be commended, he wonders how the town can fall in love with rustick deformity; if a new performance of genius happens to be celebrated, he pronounces the writer a hopeless ideot, without knowledge of books or life, and without the understanding by which it must be acquired. His exaggerations are generally without effect upon those whom he compels to hear them; and though it will sometimes happen that the timorous are awed by his violence, and the credulous mistake his confidence for knowledge, yet the opinions which he endeavours to suppress soon recover their former strength, as the trees that bend to the tempest erect themselves again when its force is past.

THE whisperer is more dangerous. He easily gains attention by a soft address, and ex-
cites

cites curiosity by an air of importance. As secrets are not to be made cheap by promiscuous publication, he calls a select audience about him, and gratifies their vanity with an appearance of trust by communicating his intelligence in a low voice. Of the trader he can tell that though he seems to manage a very extensive commerce, talks in high terms of the funds, and has a counting-house crowded with clerks and porters, yet his wealth is not equal to his reputation; he has lately suffered much by the miscarriage of an expensive project, and had a greater share than is publickly acknowledged in the rich ship that perished by the storm. Of the beauty he has little to say, but that they who see her in a morning do not discover all these graces which are admired in the park. Of the writer he affirms with great certainty, that, though the excellence of the work be incontestable, he can justly claim but a small part of the reputation; that he owed most of the shining images and elevated sentiments to the kindness of a secret friend; and that the accuracy and equality of the stile was produced by the successive correction of the chief criticks of the age.

As every one is pleased with imagining that he knows something not yet commonly divulged, secret history easily gains credit; but it is for the most part believed only while it circulates in whispers, and when once it is openly told is openly confuted.

THE most pernicious enemy is the man of moderation. Without interest in the question, or any motive but honest curiosity, this impartial and zealous enquirer after truth, is ready to hear whatever can be urged on either side, and always disposed to kind interpretations and favourable opinions. He has heard the trader's affairs reported with great variation, and after a diligent comparison of the evidence, concludes it probable that the splendid superstructure of business and credit being originally built upon a narrow basis, has lately been found to totter; but between dilatory payment and bankruptcy there is a great distance; many merchants have supported themselves by expedients for a time, without any final injury to their creditors; what is lost by one adventure may be recovered by another; and no man, however prudent, can secure

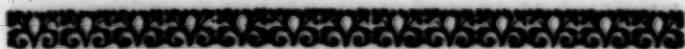
secure himself against the failure of correspondents. He believes that a young lady pleased with admiration, and desirous to make perfect what is already excellent, may heighten some of her charms by artificial improvements, but surely most of her beauties must be genuine, and who can say that he is wholly what he endeavours to appear? The author he knows to be a man of diligence, who perhaps does not sparkle with the fire of *Homer*, but has the judgment to discover his own deficiencies, and to supply them by the help of others; and in his opinion modesty is a quality so amiable and rare, that it ought to find a patron wherever it appears, and may justly be preferred by the publick suffrage to petulant wit and ostentatious literature.

HE who thus discovers failings with unwillingness, and extenuates the Faults which cannot be denied, puts an end at once to doubt or vindication; his hearers repose upon his candour and veracity, and admit the charge without allowing the excuse.

SUCH are the arts by which the envious, the idle, the peevish, and the thoughtless ob-

76 The RAMBLER. N°. 144.

struct that worth which they cannot equal, and by artifices thus easy, sordid, and detestable is industry defeated, beauty blasted, and genius depressed.



NUMB. 145. TUESDAY, August 6, 1751.

*Non si priores Mæonius tenet
Sedes Homerus, Pindaricæ latent,
Cæque & Alcæi minaces
Stesichorique graves Camænæ. HOR.*

IT is allowed by those who have considered the constitution of society, that vocations and employments of least dignity are of the most apparent use; that the meanest artisan or manufacturer contributes more to the accommodation of life, than the profound scholar and argumentative theorist; and that the publick would suffer less immediate inconvenience from the banishment of philosophers, than from the extinction of any common trade.

SOME

SOME have been so forcibly struck with this observation, that they have in the first warmth of their discovery thought it reasonable to alter the common distribution of dignity, and have ventured to condemn mankind of universal ingratitude. For if justice exacts that those by whom we are most benefited should be most honoured, what better title can be produced to praise and veneration than successful labour for the good of others? And what labour can be more useful than that which procures to families and Communities those necessities which supply the wants of nature, or those conveniencies by which ease, security, and elegance are conferred?

THIS is one of the innumerable theories which the first attempt to reduce them into practice certainly destroys. If we estimate dignity by immediate usefulness, agriculture is undoubtedly the first and noblest science; yet we see the plow driven, the clod broken, the manure spread, the seeds scattered, and the harvest reaped, by men whom those that feed upon their industry will never be persuaded to admire for their wisdom, or admit

into the same rank with heroes, or with sages; and who, after all the confessions which truth may extort in favour of their occupation, must be content to fill up the lowest class of the common-wealth, to form the base of the pyramid of subordination, and lie buried in obscurity themselves while they support all that is splendid, conspicuous, or exalted.

It will be found upon a closer inspection, that this part of the conduct of mankind is by no means contrary to reason or equity. Remuneratory honours are proportioned at once to the usefulness and difficulty of performances, and are properly adjusted by comparison of the mental and corporeal abilities, which they appear to employ. That work, however necessary, which is carried on only by muscular strength and manual dexterity, is not of equal esteem in the consideration of rational beings, with the tasks that exercise the intellectual powers, and require the active vigour of imagination, or the gradual and laborious investigations of reason.

THE merit of all manual occupations seems to terminate in the inventor; and surely the
the

the first ages cannot be charged with ingratitude; since those who civilized barbarians, and taught them how to secure themselves from cold and hunger were numbered amongst their deities. But these arts once discovered by philosophy, and facilitated by experience, are afterwards practised with very little assistance from the faculties of the soul; nor is any thing necessary to the regular discharge of these inferior duties, beyond that rude observation which the most sluggish intellect may practise, and that industry which the stimulations of necessity naturally enforce.

YET, though the refusal of statues and panegyrics to those who employ only their hands and feet in the service of mankind may be easily justified, I am far from intending to incite the petulance of pride, to justify the superciliousness of grandeur, or to intercept any part of that tenderness and benevolence which by the privilege of their common nature one man may claim from another.

THAT it would be neither wise nor equitable to discourage the husbandman, the labourer,

bourer, the miner, or the smith, is easily discovered and generally granted; but there is another race of beings equally obscure and equally indigent, who because their usefulness is somewhat less obvious to vulgar apprehensions, live unrewarded and die unpitied, and who have been long exposed to insult without a defender, and to censure without an apologist.

THE authors of *London* were formerly computed by *Swift* at several thousands, and there is not any reason for suspecting that their number has decreased. Of these only a very few can be said to produce, or endeavour to produce new ideas, to extend any principle of science, or gratify the imagination with any uncommon train of images or contexture of events; the rest, however laborious, however arrogant, can only be considered as the drudges of the pen, the manufacturers of literature, who have set up for authors, either with or without a regular initiation, and like other artificers have no other care than to deliver their tale of wares at the stated time.

Nº. 145. The RAMBLER. 81

It has been formerly imagined, that he who intends the entertainment or instruction of others, must feel in himself some peculiar impulse of genius; that he must watch the happy minute in which this natural fire is excited, in which his mind is elevated with nobler sentiments, enlightened with clearer views, and invigorated with stronger comprehension; that he must carefully select his thoughts and polish his expressions; and animate his efforts with the hope of raising a monument of learning, which neither time nor envy shall be able to destroy.

BUT the authors whom I am now endeavouring to recommend have been too long *backneyed in the ways of men* to indulge the chimerical ambition of praise or immortality; they have seldom any claim to the trade of writing but that they have tried some other without success; they perceive no particular summons to composition, except the sound of the clock; they have no other rule than the law or the fashion for admitting their thoughts or rejecting them; and about the opinion of posterity they have little solicitude, for their productions are sel-

dom intended to remain in the world longer than a week.

THAT such authors are not to be rewarded with praise is evident, since nothing can be admired when it ceases to exist; but surely though they cannot aspire to honour, they may be exempted from ignominy, and adopted into that order of men which deserves our kindness though not our reverence. These papers of the day, the *Ephemera* of learning, have uses often more adequate to the purposes of common life than more pompous and durable volumes. If it is necessary for every man to be more acquainted with his contemporaries than with past generations, and to know the events which may immediately affect his fortune or his quiet, rather than the revolutions of antient kingdoms, in which he has neither possessions nor expectations; if it be pleasing to hear of the preferment and dismissal of statesmen, the birth of heirs, and the marriage of beauties, the humble author of journals and gazettes, must be considered as a liberal dispenser of beneficial knowledge.

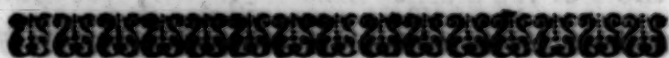
EVEN

EVEN the abridger, compiler and translator, though their labours cannot be ranked with those of the diurnal historiographer, yet must not be rashly doomed to annihilation. Every size of readers requires a genius correspondent to their capacity; some delight in abstracts and epitomes because they want room in their memory for long details, and content themselves with effects, without enquiry after causes; some minds are overpowered by splendor of sentiment, as some eyes are offended by a glaring light, and will gladly contemplate an author in an humble imitation, as we look without pain upon the sun in the water.

As every writer has his use, every writer ought to have his patrons; and since no man, however high he may now stand, can be certain that he shall not be soon thrown down from his elevation by criticism or caprice, the common interest of learning requires that her sons should cease from intestine hostilities, and instead of sacrificing each other to malice and contempt, endeavour to
avert

84 The RAMBLER. N°. 146.

avert persecution from the meanest of their fraternity.



NUMB. 146. SATURDAY, *August 10*, 1751.

*Sunt illic duo, tresque, qui revolvant
Nostrarum tineas ineptiarum:
Sed cum sponsio, fabulaeque lassæ
De Scorpo fuerint et Incitato.* MART.

NONE of the projects or designs which exercise the mind of man, are equally subject to obstructions and disappointments with the pursuit of fame. Riches cannot easily be denied to them who have something of greater value to offer in exchange; he whose fortune is endangered by litigation, will not refuse to augment the wealth of the lawyer; he whose days are darkened by languor, or whose nerves are excruciated by pain, is compelled to pay tribute to the science of healing. But praise may be always omitted without inconvenience. When once a man has made celebrity necessary to his hap-

happinefs, he has put it in the power of the weakeft and moft timorous malignity, if not to take away his fatisfaction, at leaft to withhold it. His enemies may indulge their pride by airy negligence, and gratify their malice by quiet neutrality. They that could never have injured a character by inveftives may combine to annihilate it by filence ; as the women of *Rome* threatened to put an end to conquest and dominion, by fupplying no children to the commonwealth.

WHEN a writer has with long toil produced a work intended to burft upon mankind with unexpected luftre, and withdraw the attention of the learned world from every other controverfy or enquiry, he is feldom contented to wait long without the enjoyment of his new praifes. With an imagination full of his own importance, he walks out like a monarch in difguife, to learn the various opinions of his readers. Prepared to feaft upon admiration ; compofed to encounter cenfures without emotion ; and determined not to fuffer his quiet to be injured by a fenfibility too exquisite of praife or blame, but to laugh with equal contempt at
trivial

86 The RAMBLER. N^o. 146.

trivial objections and injudicious commendations, he enters the places of mingled conversation, sits down to his tea in an obscure corner, and while he appears to examine a file of antiquated journals catches the conversation of the whole room. He listens, but hears no mention of his book, and therefore supposes that he has disappointed his curiosity by delay, and that as men of learning would naturally begin their conversation with such a wonderful novelty, they had digressed to other subjects before his arrival. The company disperses, and their places are supplied by others equally ignorant, or equally careless. The same expectation hurries him to another place, from which the same disappointment drives him soon away. His impatience then grows violent and tumultuous; he ranges over the town with restless curiosity, and hears in one quarter of a cricket-match, in another of a pick-pocket; is told by some of an unexpected bankruptcy, by others of a turtle feast; is sometimes provoked by importunate enquiries after the white bear, and sometimes with praises of the dancing dog; he is afterwards entreated to give his judgment upon a wager about the height

N^o. 146. THE RAMBLER. 87

height of the monument; invited to see a foot race in the adjacent villages; desired to read a ludicrous advertisement; or consulted about the most effectual method of making enquiry after a favourite cat. The whole world is busied in affairs, which he thinks below the notice of reasonable creatures, and which are nevertheless sufficient to withdraw all regard from his labours and his merits.

HE resolves at last to violate his own modesty, and to recal the talkers from their folly by an enquiry after himself. He finds every one provided with an answer; one has seen the work advertised, but never met with any that had read it; another has been so often imposed upon by specious titles, that he never buys a book till its character is established; a third wonders what any man can hope to produce after so many writers of greater eminence; the next has enquired after the author, but can hear no account of him, and therefore suspects the name to be fictitious; and another knows him to be a man condemned by indigence to write too frequently what he does not understand.

MANY

MANY are the consolations with which the unhappy author endeavours to allay his vexation, and fortify his patience. He has written with too little indulgence to the understanding of common readers; he has fallen upon an age without taste or curiosity, in which all regard to solid knowledge, and sense of delicate refinement, have given way to low merriment and idle buffoonry, and therefore no writer can hope for distinction, who has any higher purpose than to raise laughter. He finds that his enemies, such as apparent superiority will always raise, have been industrious, while his performance was in the press, to vilify and blast it; and that the bookseller, whom he had resolved to enrich, has rivals in his profession, that maliciously obstruct the circulation of his copies. He at last reposes upon the consideration, that the noblest works of learning and genius have always made their way slowly against ignorance and prejudice; and that reputation which is never to be lost must be gradually obtained, as animals of longest life are observed not soon to attain their full stature and strength.

By

By such arts of voluntary delusion does every man endeavour to conceal his own unimportance from himself. It is long before we are convinced of the small proportion which every individual bears to the collective body of mankind; or learn how few can be interested in the fortune of any single man; how little vacancy is left in the world for any new object of attention; to how small extent the brightest blaze of merit can be spread amidst the mists of business and of folly; and how soon it is always clouded by the intervention of other novelties. Not only the writer of books, but the commander of armies, and the deliverer of nations will easily outlive all noisy and popular reputation: he may be celebrated for a time by the public voice, but his actions and his name will soon be considered as remote and unaffecting, and will be rarely mentioned but by those whose alliance or dependance gives them some vanity to gratify by frequent commemoration.

It seems not to be sufficiently considered how little renown can be admitted in the world.

world. Mankind are kept perpetually busy by their fears or desires, and have not more leisure from their own affairs, than to acquaint themselves with the accidents of the current day. Engaged in contriving some refuge from calamity, or in shortening the way to some new possession, they seldom suffer their thoughts to wander to the past or future; none but a few solitary students have leisure to enquire into the claims of heroes or sages; removed from the notice of the present age, and names which hoped to range over kingdoms and continents shrink at last into cloysters or colleges.

NOR is it certain, that even of these dark and narrow habitations, these last retreats of fame, the possession will be long kept. Of men devoted to literature very few extend their views beyond some particular science, and the greater part seldom enquire, even in their own profession, for any authors but those whom the present mode of study happens to force upon their notice; they desire not to fill their minds with unfashionable knowledge, but embrace the established system, and contentedly resign to oblivion those
books

N^o. 146. The RAMBLER. 93

books which they now find censured or neglected.

THE hope of fame, which almost every man indulges who gives his name to the public, is necessarily connected with such considerations as must abate the ardour of confidence, and repress the vigour of pursuit. Whoever claims renown from any kind of excellence, expects to fill the place which is now possessed by another, for there are already names of every class sufficient to employ all that will desire to remember them; and surely he that is pushing his predecessors into the gulph of obscurity, cannot but sometimes suspect, that he must himself give way in like manner, and as he stands upon the same precipice, be swept away with the same violence.

It sometimes happens, that fame begins when life is at an end; but far the greater number of candidates for applause have owed their reception in the world to some favourable casualties, and have therefore immediately sunk into neglect, when death stripped them of their casual influence, and neither
fortune

92 The RAMBLER. N^o 146.

fortune nor patronage operated in their favour. Among those who have better claims to regard, the honour paid to their memory is commonly proportionate to the reputation which they enjoyed in their lives, though still growing fainter, as it is at a greater distance from the first emission; and since it is so difficult to obtain the notice of contemporaries, how little is to be hoped from future times? What can merit effect by its own force, when the help of art or friendship can scarcely support it?



NUMB. 147. TUESDAY, August 13, 1751.

Tu nihil invitâ dices faciesve Minervâ

HOR.

To the RAMBLER.

S I R,

AS little things grow great by continual accumulation, I hope you will not think the dignity of your character impaired by an account of a ludicrous persecution, which though it produces no scenes of horror or of ruin, yet by incessant importunity of
vexa-

Nº. 147. The RAMBLER. 93

vexation, wears away the happiness of many of your readers, and consumes those juvenile years which nature seems particularly to have assigned to cheerfulness, in silent anxiety and helpless resentment.

I AM the eldest son of a gentleman, who having inherited a large estate from his ancestors, and feeling no very strong desire either to encrease or lessen it, has from the time of his marriage generally resided at his own seat, where by dividing his time among the duties of a father, a master; and a magistrate, the study of literature, and the offices of civility, he finds means to rid himself of the day, without any of those amusements, which all those with whom my residence in this place has made me acquainted think necessary to lighten the burthen of existence.

WHEN my age made me capable of instruction, my father prevailed upon a gentleman, long known at *Oxford* for the extent of his learning and purity of his manners, to undertake my education. The regard with which I saw him treated, disposed me to consider his instructions as too important to be neglected,
and

94 The RAMBLER. N^o. 147.

and I therefore soon formed a habit of attention, by which I made very quick advances in different kinds of learning, and heard, perhaps too often, very flattering comparisons of my own proficiency with that of others either less docile by nature, or less happily forwarded by instruction. I was caressed and applauded by all that exchanged visits with my father, and as young men are with little difficulty taught to judge favourably of themselves, began to think that close application was no longer necessary, and that the time was now come when I was at liberty to read only for amusement, and was to receive the reward of my fatigues in praise and admiration.

WHILE I was thus banquetting upon my own perfections, and longing in secret for an opportunity to escape from the superintendance of my tutor, my father's brother came from *London* to pass a summer at his native place. A lucrative employment which he possessed, and a fondness for the conversation and diversions of the gay part of mankind, had so long kept him from rural excursions, that I had never seen him since my infancy. My
curiosity

N^o. 147. The RAMBLER. 95

curiosity was therefore strongly excited by the hope of observing a character more nearly, which I had hitherto revered only at a distance.

FROM all private and intimate conversation I was long withheld by the perpetual confluence of visitants, with whom the first news of my uncle's arrival crouded the house; but was amply recompensed by seeing an exact and punctilious practice of the arts of a courtier, in all the stratagems of endearment, the gradations of respect, and variations of courtesy. I remarked with what justice of distribution he divided his talk to a wide circle; with what address he offered every man an occasion of indulging some favourite topick, or displaying some particular attainment; the judgment with which he regulated his enquiries after the absent; and the care with which he shewed all the companions of his early years how strongly they were infixed in his memory, by the mention of past incidents, and the recital of puerile kindnesses dangers and frolicks. I soon discovered that he possessed some science of graciousness and attraction which books had not taught, and of which

which neither I nor my father had any knowledge; that he had the power of obliging those whom he did not benefit; that he diffused upon his cursory behaviour and most trifling actions a gloss of softness and delicacy by which every one was dazzled; and that by some occult method of captivation, he animated the timorous, softened the supercilious, and opened the reserved. I could not but repine at the inelegance of my own manners which left me no hopes but not to offend, and at the inefficacy of rustick benevolence which gained no friends but by real service.

My uncle saw the veneration with which I caught every accent of his voice, and watched every motion of his hand; and the awkward diligence with which I endeavoured to imitate his embrace of fondness, and his bow of respect. He was like others easily flattered by an imitator by whom he could not fear ever to be rivalled, and repaid my assiduities with compliments and professions. Our fondness was so encreased by a mutual endeavour to please each other, that when he returned to *London*, he declared himself unable
to

to leave a nephew so amiable and so accomplished behind him; and obtained my father's permission to enjoy my company for a few months, by a promise to initiate me in the arts of politeness, and introduce me into publick life.

THE courtier had little inclination to fatigue, and therefore by travelling very slowly, afforded me time for more loose and familiar conversation; but I soon found that by a few enquiries which he was not well prepared to satisfy I had made him weary of his young companion. His element was a mixed assembly, where ceremony and healths, compliments and common topicks kept the tongue employed with very little assistance from memory or reflection; but in the chariot, where he was necessitated to support a regular tenor of conversation, without any relief from a new commer, or any power of starting into gay digressions or destroying argument by a jest, he soon discovered that poverty of ideas which had been hitherto concealed under the tinsel of politeness. The first day he entertained me with the novelties and wonders with which I should be asto-

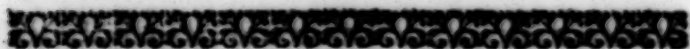
nished at my entrance into *London*, and cautioned me with apparent admiration of his own wisdom against the arts by which rusticity is frequently deluded. The same detail and the same advice he would have repeated on the second day; but as I every moment diverted the discourse to the history of the towns by which we passed, or some other subject of learning or of reason, he soon lost his vivacity, grew peevish and silent, wrapped his cloak about him, composed himself to slumber, and reserved his gaiety for fitter auditors.

At length I entered *London*, and my uncle was reinstated in his superiority. He awaked at once to loquacity as soon as our wheels rattled on the pavement, and told me the name of every street as we crossed it, and owner of every house as we passed by. He presented me to my aunt, a lady of great eminence for the number of her acquaintances, and splendor of her assemblies, and either in kindness or revenge consulted with her in my presence, how I might be most advantageously dressed for my first appearance, and most expeditiously disencumbered
from

from my villatick bashfulness. My indignation at familiarity thus contemptuous flushed in my face; they mistook anger for shame, and alternately exerted their eloquence upon the benefits of publick education, and the happiness of an assurance early acquired.

ASSURANCE is indeed the only qualification to which they seem to have annexed merit, and assurance therefore is perpetually recommended to me as the supply of every defect, and the ornament of every excellence. I never sit silent in company when secret history is circulating, but I am reproached for want of assurance. If I fail to return the stated answer to a compliment; if I am disconcerted by unexpected raillery; if I blush when I am discovered gazing on a beauty, or hesitate when I find myself embarrassed in an argument; if I am unwilling to talk of what I do not understand, or timorous in undertaking offices which I cannot gracefully perform; if I suffer a more lively tatler to recount the casualties of a game, or a nimbler fop to pick up a fan, I am censured between pity and contempt, as a wretch doomed to grovel in obscurity for want of assurance.

I HAVE found many young persons harrassed in the same manner by those to whom age has given nothing but the assurance which they recommend ; and therefore cannot but think it useful to inform them, that cowardice and delicacy are not to be confounded, and that he whose stupidity has armed him against the shafts of ridicule will always act and speak with greater audacity than they whose sensibility represses their ardor, and who dare never let their confidence outgrow their abilities.



NUMB. 148. SATURDAY, *August 17, 1751.*

*Me pater sævis oneret catenis
Quod viro clemens misero peperci,
Me vel extremis Numidarum in oris
 Classe releget.*

HOR.

POLITICIANS remark that no oppression is so heavy or lasting as that which is inflicted by the perversion and exorbitance of legal authority. The robber may be seized,

zed, and the invader repelled whenever they are found; they who pretend no right but that of force, may by force be punished or suppressed. But when plunder bears the name of impost, and murder is perpetrated by a judicial sentence, fortitude is intimidated and wisdom confounded; resistance shrinks from an alliance with rebellion, and the villain remains secure in the robes of the magistrate.

EQUALLY dangerous and equally detestable are the cruelties often exercised in private families, under the venerable sanction of parental authority; the power which we are taught to honour from the first moments of reason; which is guarded from insult and violation by all that can impress awe upon the mind of man; and which therefore may wanton in cruelty without controul, and trample the bounds of right with innumerable transgressions, before duty and piety will dare to seek redress, or think themselves at liberty to recur to any other means of deliverance than supplications by which insolence is elated, and tears by which cruelty is gratified.

It was for a long time imagined by the *Romans*, that no son could be the murderer of his father, and they had therefore no punishment appropriated to parricide. They seem likewise to have believed with equal confidence that no father could be cruel to his child, and therefore they allowed every man the supreme judicature in his own house, and put the lives of his offspring into his hands. But experience informed them by degrees, that they had determined too hastily in favour of human nature; they found that instinct and habit were not able to contend with avarice or malice; that the nearest relation might be violated; and that power to whomsoever entrusted, might be ill employed. They were therefore obliged to supply and to change their Institutions; to deter the parricide by a new law, and to transfer capital punishments from the parent to the magistrate.

THERE are indeed many houses which it is impossible to enter familiarly, without discovering that parents are by no means exempt from the intoxications of dominion;
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and that he who is in no danger of hearing remonstrances but from his own conscience, will seldom be long without the art of controlling his convictions, and modifying justice by his own will.

IF in any situation the heart were inaccessible to malignity, it might be supposed to be sufficiently secured by parental relation. To have voluntarily become to any being the occasion of its existence produces an obligation to make that existence happy. To see helpless infancy stretching out her hands and pouring out her cries in testimony of dependance, without any powers to alarm jealousy, or any guilt to alienate affection, must surely awaken tenderness in every human mind; and tenderness once excited will be hourly increased by the natural contagion of felicity, by the repercussion of communicated pleasure, and the consciousness of the dignity of benefaction. I believe no generous or benevolent man can see the vilest animal courting his regard and shrinking at his anger, playing his gambols of delight before him, calling on him in distress, and flying to him in danger, without more kindness

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than

than he can persuade himself to feel for the wild and unsocial inhabitants of the air and water. We naturally endear to ourselves those to whom we impart any kind of pleasure, because we imagine their affection and esteem secured to us by the benefits which they receive.

THERE is indeed another method by which the pride of superiority may be likewise gratified. He that has extinguished all the sensations of humanity, and has no longer any satisfaction in the reflection that he is loved as the distributor of happiness, may please himself with exciting terror as the inflicter of misery; he may delight his solitude with contemplating the extent of his power and the force of his commands, in imagining the desires that flutter on the tongue which is forbidden to utter them, or the discontent which preys on the heart in which fear confines it; he may amuse himself with new contrivances of detection, multiplications of prohibition, and varieties of punishment; and swell with exultation when he considers how little of the homage that he receives he owes to choice.

THAT

THAT princes of this character have been known the history of all absolute kingdoms will inform us; and since, as *Aristotle* observes, *ἡ ἀριστοκρατία παρὰ φύσιν*, the government of a family is naturally monarchical, it is like other monarchies too often arbitrarily administered. The regal and parental tyrant differ only in the extent of their dominions, and the number of their slaves. The same passions cause the same miseries; except that seldom any prince however despotick, has so far shaken off all awe of the publick eye as to venture upon those freaks of injustice, which are sometimes indulged under the secrecy of a private dwelling. Capricious injunctions, partial decisions, unequal allotments, distributions of reward not by merit but by fancy, and punishments regulated not by the degree of the offence but by the humour of the judge, are too frequent where no power is known but that of a father.

THAT he delights in the misery of others no man will confess, and yet what other motive can make a father cruel? the king may be instigated by one man to the destruction

of another; he may sometimes think himself endangered by the virtues of a subject; he may dread the successful general or the popular orator; his avarice may point out golden confiscations; and his guilt may whisper that he can only be secure, by cutting off all power of revenge.

BUT what can a parent hope from the oppression of those who were born to his protection, of those who can disturb him with no competition, who can enrich him with no spoils? Why cowards are cruel may be easily discovered; but for what reason not more infamous than cowardice can that man delight in oppression who has nothing to fear?

THE unjustifiable severity of a parent is loaded with this aggravation, that those whom he injures are always in his sight. The injustice of a prince is often exercised upon those of whom he never had any personal or particular knowledge; and the sentence which he pronounces, whether of banishment imprisonment or death, removes from his view the man whom he condemns. But the domestick oppressor dooms himself to
gaze

gaze upon those faces which he clouds with terror and with sorrow ; and beholds every moment the effects of his own barbarities. He that can bear to give continual pain to those who surround him, and can walk with satisfaction in the gloom of his own presence : he that can see submissive misery without relenting, and meet without emotion the eye that implores mercy, or demands justice, will scarcely be amended by remonstrance or admonition ; he has found means of stopping the avenues of tenderness, and arming his heart against the force of reason.

EVEN though no consideration should be paid to the great law of social beings, by which every individual is commanded to consult the happiness of others, yet the harsh parent is less to be vindicated than any other criminal, because he less provides for the happiness of himself. Every man however little he loves others would willingly be loved ; every man hopes to live long, and therefore hopes for that time at which he shall sink back to imbecillity, and must depend for ease and cheerfulness upon the officiousness of others. But how has he obviated the
incon-

inconveniencies of old age, who alienates from him the assistance of his children, and whose bed must be surrounded in his last hours, in the hours of languor and dejection of impatience and of pain, by strangers to whom his life is indifferent, or by enemies to whom his death is desirable.

PIETY will indeed in good minds overcome resentment, and those who have been harassed by brutality will forget the injuries which they have suffered so far as to perform the last duties with alacrity and zeal. But surely no resentment can be equally painful with kindness thus undeserved, nor can severer punishment be imprecated upon a man not wholly lost in meanness and stupidity, than through the tediousness of decrepitude, to be reproached by the kindness of his own children, to receive not the tribute but the alms of attendance, and to owe every relief of his miseries not to gratitude but to mercy.

NUMB.

NUMB. 149. TUESDAY, August 20, 1751.

*Quod non sit Pylades hoc tempore, non sit Orestes
Miraris? Pylades, Marce, bibebat idem.*

Nec melior panis, turdusve dabatur Oresti:

Sed par, atque eadem cœna duobus erat.—

Te Cadmæa Tyros, me pinguis Gallia vestit:

Vis te purpureum, Marce, sagatus amem?

*Ut præstem Pyladen, aliquis mihi præstet
Orestem:*

Hoc non fit verbis: Marce, ut ameris, ama.

To the RAMBLER.

S I R,

NO depravity of the mind has been more frequently or justly censured than ingratitude. There is indeed sufficient reason for looking on those that can return evil for good, and repay kindness and assistance with hatred or neglect, as corrupted beyond the common degrees of wickedness; nor will he who has once been clearly detected in acts of injury to his benefactor, deserve to be numbered among social beings; he has endeavoured to destroy confidence, to intercept sym-

sympathy, and to turn every man's attention wholly on himself.

THERE is always danger lest the honest abhorrence of a crime should raise the passions with too much violence against the man to whom it is imputed. In proportion as guilt is more enormous, it ought to be ascertained by stronger evidence. The charge against ingratitude is very general; almost every man can tell what favours he has conferred upon insensibility, and how much happiness he has bestowed without return; but perhaps if these patrons and protectors were confronted with any whom they boast of having befriended, it would often appear that they over-rate their benevolence, that they consulted only their pleasure or vanity, and repaid themselves their petty donatives by gratifications of insolence and indulgence of contempt.

It has happened that much of my time has been passed in a dependant state, and consequently I have received many favours in the opinion of those at whose expence I have been maintained; yet I do not feel in
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N^o 149. The RAMBLER. III

in my heart any burning gratitude or tumultuous affection ; and as I would not willingly suppose myself less susceptible of virtuous passions than the rest of mankind, I shall lay the history of my life before you, that you may by your judgment of my conduct, either reform or confirm my present sentiments.

My father was the second son of a very antient and wealthy family. He married a lady of equal birth, whose fortune, joined to his own, might have supported him and his posterity in honour and plenty ; but being gay and ambitious, he prevailed on his friends, to procure him a post, which gave him opportunity of displaying in publick his elegance and politeness. My mother was equally pleased with splendor, and equally careless of expence ; they both justified their profusion to themselves, by endeavouring to believe it necessary to the extension of their acquaintance and improvement of their interest ; and whenever any place became vacant, they expected to be repaid by distinction and advancement. In the midst of these schemes and hopes my father was snatched away by
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an apoplexy ; and my mother, who had no pleasure but in dress, equipage, assemblies and compliments, finding that she could live no longer in her accustomed rank, sunk into dejection, and in two years wore out her life with envy and discontent.

I WAS sent with a sister, one year younger than myself, to the elder brother of my father. We were not yet capable of observing how much fortune influences affection, but flattered ourselves on the road with the tenderness and regard with which we should doubtless be treated by our uncle. Our reception was rather frigid than malignant ; we were introduced to our young cousins, and for the first month more frequently consoled than upbraided ; but in a short time we found our prattle repressed, our dress neglected, our endearments unregarded, and our requests referred to the housekeeper.

THE forms of decency were now violated, and every day produced new insults. We were soon brought to the necessity of receding from our imagined equality with our cousins, to whom we sunk into humble

companions without choice or influence, expected only to echo their opinions, facilitate their desires, and accompany their rambles. It was unfortunate that our early introduction into polite company and habitual knowledge of the arts of civility, had given us such an appearance of superiority to the awkward bashfulness of our relations, as naturally drew respect and preference from every stranger who happened on any occasion to enter the house; and my aunt was forced to assert the dignity of her own children, while they were sculking in corners for fear of notice and hanging down their heads in silent confusion, by relating the indiscretion of our father, displaying her own kindness, lamenting the misery of birth without estate, and declaring her anxiety for our future provision, and the expedients which she had formed to secure us from those follies or crimes, to which the conjunction of pride and want often gives occasion. In a short time care was taken to prevent such vexatious mistakes; we were told, that fine cloaths would only fill our heads with false expectations, and our dress was therefore accommodated to our fortune.

CHILD-

CHILDHOOD is not easily dejected or mortified. We felt no lasting pain from insolence or neglect, but finding that we were favoured and commended by all whose interest did not prompt them to discountenance us, preserved our vivacity and spirit to years of greater sensibility. It then became irksome and disgusting to live without any principle of action but the will of another, and we often met privately in the garden to lament our condition, and to ease our hearts with mutual narratives of caprice peevishness and affront.

THERE are innumerable modes of insult and tokens of contempt, for which it is not easy to find a name, which vanish to nothing in an attempt to describe them, and yet may by continual repetition, make day pass after day in sorrow and in terror. Phrases of cursory compliment and established salutation may by a different modulation of the voice or cast of the countenance convey contrary meanings, and be changed from indications of respect to expressions of scorn. The dependant who cultivates delicacy in himself very little consults his own tranquillity. My unhappy vigilance is every moment discovering some petulance of

of accent, or arrogance of mien, some vehemence of interrogation, or quickness of reply that recalls my poverty to my mind; and which I feel more acutely as I know not how to resent it.

You are not however to imagine that I think myself discharged from the duties of gratitude, only because my relations do not adjust their looks or tune their voices to my expectation. The insolence of benefaction terminates not in negative rudeness or obliquities of insult. I am often told in express terms of the miseries from which charity has snatched me, while multitudes are suffered by relations equally near to devolve upon the parish; and have more than once heard it numbered among other favours that I am admitted to the same table with my cousins.

THAT I sit at the first table I must acknowledge, but I sit there only that I may feel the stings of inferiority. My enquiries are neglected, my opinion is overborn, my assertions are controverted; and, as insolence always propagates itself, the servants overlook me in imitation of their master; if I call modestly,
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I am not heard, if loudly, my usurpation of authority is checked by a general frown. I am often obliged to look uninvited upon delicacies, and sometimes desired to rise upon very slight pretences.

THE incivilities to which I am exposed would give me less pain were they not aggravated by the tears of my sister, whom the young ladies are hourly tormenting with every art of feminine persecution. As it is said of the supreme magistrate of *Venice* that he is a prince in one place and a slave in another, my sister is a servant to her cousins in their apartments, and a companion only at the table. Her wit and beauty draw so much regard away from them, that they never suffer her to appear with them in any place where they solicit notice, or expect admiration, and when they are visited by neighbouring ladies and pass their hours in domestic amusements, she is sometimes called to fill a vacancy, insulted with contemptuous freedoms, and dismissed to her needle when her place is supplied. The heir has of late by the instigation of his sisters begun to harass her with clownish jocularities; he seems inclined to make his first rude essays
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N°. 149. The RAMBLER. 117

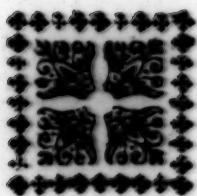
of waggery upon her, and by the connivance, if not encouragement of his father, treats her with such licentious brutality, as I cannot bear though I cannot punish it.

I BEG to be informed Mr. *Rambler*, how much we can be supposed to owe to beneficence, exerted on terms like these? to beneficence which polutes its gifts with contumely, and may be truly said to pander to pride? I would willingly be told, whether insolence does not reward its own liberalities, and whether he that exacts servility, can with justice at the same time expect affection?

I am,

Sir, &c.

HYPERDULUS.



NUMB.

NUMB. 150. SATURDAY, *August* 24, 1751.

*O munera nondum
Intellecta Deum!*

LUCAN.

AS daily experience makes it evident that misfortunes are unavoidably incident to human life, that calamity will neither be repelled by fortitude, nor escaped by flight, neither awed by greatness, nor eluded by obscurity ; philosophers have endeavoured to reconcile us to that condition which they cannot teach us to mend, by persuading us that most of our evils are made afflictive only by ignorance or perverseness, and that nature has annexed to every vicissitude of external circumstances, some advantage sufficient to overbalance all its inconveniencies.

THIS attempt may perhaps be justly suspected of resemblance to the practice of physicians, who when they cannot mitigate pain destroy sensibility, and endeavour to conceal by opiates the inefficacy of their other medicines. The panegyrists of calamity have more frequently gained applause to their wit, than acquiescence to their arguments ; nor has

has it appeared that the most musical oratory or subtle ratiocination has been able long to overpower the anguish of oppression, the tediousness of languor, or the longings of want.

YET it may be generally remarked that, where much has been attempted, something has been performed; though the discoveries or acquisitions of man are not always adequate to the expectations of his pride, they are at least sufficient to animate his industry. The antidotes with which philosophy has medicated the cup of life, though they cannot give it salubrity and sweetness, have at least allayed its bitterness, and contempered its malignity; the balm which she drops upon the wounds of the mind, abates their pain though it cannot heal them.

By suffering willingly what we cannot avoid, we secure ourselves from vain and immoderate disquiet; we preserve for better purposes that strength which would be unprofitably wasted in wild efforts of desperation, and maintain that circumspection which may enable us to seize every support, and improve every alleviation. This calmness will
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be more easily obtained, as the attention is more powerfully withdrawn from the contemplation of unmingled unabated evil, and diverted to those accidental benefits which prudence may confer on every state.

SENECA has attempted not only to pacify us in misfortune, but almost to allure us to it, by representing it as necessary to the pleasures of the mind. *He that never was acquainted with adversity, says he, has seen the world but on one side, and is ignorant of half the scenes of nature.* He invites his pupil to calamity, as the Syrens allured the passenger to their coasts, by promising that he shall return *πλέον εἰδώς*, with encrease of knowledge, with enlarged views, and multiplied ideas.

CURIOSITY is, in great and generous minds, the first passion and the last; and perhaps always predominates in proportion to the strength of the contemplative faculties. He who easily comprehends all that is before him, and soon exhausts any single subject, is always eager for new enquiries, and in proportion as the intellectual eye takes in a wider prospect, it must be gratified with variety

riety by more rapid flights, and bolder excursions; nor perhaps can there be proposed to those who have been accustomed to the pleasures of thought, a more powerful incitement to any undertaking, than the hope of filling their imagination with new images, of clearing their doubts, and enlightening their reason.

WHEN *Jason*, in *Valerius Flaccus*, would incline the young prince *Acastus* to accompany him in the first essay of navigation, he disperses his apprehensions of danger by representations of the new tracts of earth and heaven which the expedition would spread before their eyes; and tells him with what grief he will hear at their return, of the countries which they shall have seen, and the toils which they have surmounted.

O quantum teræ, quantum cognoscere cæli
Permissum est! pelagus quantos aperimus in
usus!

Nunc forsan grave reris opus: sed læta re-
curret

Cum ratis, & caram cum jam mihi reddet
Jolcon;

Quis pudor heu nostros tibi tunc audire labores!

Quam referam visas tua per suspiria gentes!

G

Acastus

Acastus was soon prevailed upon by his curiosity to set rocks and hardships at defiance, and commit his life to the winds; and the same motives have in all ages had the same effect upon those whom the desire of fame or wisdom has distinguished from the lower orders of mankind.

If therefore it can be proved that distress is necessary to the attainment of knowledge, and that a happy situation hides from us so large a part of the field of meditation, the envy of many who repine at the sight of affluence and splendor will be much diminished; for such is the delight of mental superiority, that none on whom nature or study have conferred it, would purchase the gifts of fortune by its loss.

It is certain, that however the rhetoric of *Seneca* may have dressed adversity with extrinsec ornaments, he has justly represented it as affording some opportunities of observation, which cannot be found in continual success; he has truly asserted, that to escape misfortune is to want instruction, and that to live at ease is to live in ignorance.

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As no man can enjoy happiness without thinking that he enjoys it, the experience of calamity is necessary to a just sense of better fortune; for the good of our present state is merely comparative, and the evil which every man feels will be sufficient to disturb and harass him if he does not know how much he escapes. The lustre of diamonds is invigorated by the interposition of darker bodies; the lights of a picture are heightened by the shades. The highest pleasure which nature has indulged to sensitive perception, is that of rest after fatigue; yet that state which labour heightens into delight is without it only ease, and is incapable of satisfying the mind without the superaddition of diversified amusements.

PROSPERITY, as is truly asserted by *Seneca*, very much obstructs the knowledge of ourselves. No man can form a just estimate of his own powers by unactive speculation. That fortitude which has encountered no dangers, that prudence which has surmounted no difficulties, that integrity which has been attacked by no temptations, can at best

be considered but as gold not yet brought to the test, of which therefore the true value cannot be assigned. *He that traverses the lists without an adversary, may receive, says the philosopher, the reward of victory, but he has no pretensions to the honour.* If it be the highest happiness of man to contemplate himself with satisfaction, and to receive the gratulations of his own conscience, he whose courage has made way amidst the turbulence of opposition, and whose vigour has broken through the snares of distress, has many advantages over these that have slept in the shades of indolence, and whose retrospect of time can entertain them with nothing but day rising upon day, and year gliding after year.

EQUALLY necessary is some variety of fortune to a nearer inspection of the manners principles and affections of mankind. Princes, when they would know the opinions or grievances of their subjects, find it necessary to steal away from the grandeur of guards and attendants, and mingle on equal terms among the people. To him who is known to have the power of doing good
or

N^o. 150. The RAMBLER. 125

or harm; nothing is shown in its natural form. The behaviour of all that approach him is regulated by his humour, their narratives are adapted to his inclination, and their reasonings determined by his opinions, whatever can alarm suspicion, or excite resentment is carefully suppressed, and nothing appears but uniformity of sentiments and ardor of affection. It may be observed, that the unvaried complaisance which ladies have the right of exacting, keeps them generally unskilled in human nature; Prosperity will always enjoy the female prerogatives, and therefore must be always in danger of female ignorance. Truth is scarcely to be heard but by those from whom it can serve no interest to conceal it, and the true motives of conduct will be only shewn when the mind acts in its natural state, without any impediment from hope or fear.

NUMB. 151. TUESDAY, *August 27, 1751.*

Ἀμφὶ δ' ἀνθρώ-
πων φρεσὶν ἀμπλακίαι
ἀναρίθμητοι κρέμονται.
τοῦτο δ' ἀμήχανον ἐνερῆν
Ὅτι νῦν, καὶ ἐν τελευ-
τᾷ φέρτατος ἀνδρὶ τυχεῖν.

PIND.

THE writers of medicine and phyfiology have traced with great appearance of accuracy, the effects of time upon the human body, by marking the various periods of the constitution, and the feveral ftages by which animal life makes its progrefs from infancy to decrepitude. Though their obfervations have not enabled them to difcover how manhood may be accelerated, or old age retarded, yet furely if they be confidered only as the amusements of curiofity, they are of equal importance with conjectures on things more remote, with catalogues of the fixed ftars, and calculations of the bulk of planets.

It had been a task worthy of the moral philofophers to have confidered with equal
care

care the climactericks of the mind; to have pointed out the time at which every passion begins and ceases to predominate, and noted the regular variations of desire, and the succession of one appetite to another.

THE periods of mental change are not to be stated with equal certainty: Our bodies grow up under the care of nature, and depend so little on our own management, that something more than negligence is necessary to discompose their structure, or impede their vigour. But our minds are committed in a great measure first to the direction of others and afterwards of ourselves. It would be difficult to protract the weakness of infancy beyond the usual time, but the mind may be very easily hindered from its share of improvement, and the bulk and strength of manhood must, without the assistance of education and instruction, be informed only with the understanding of a child.

YET amidst all the disorder and inequality which variety of discipline, example, conversation, and employment produce in the intellectual advances of different men, there is still discovered by a vigilant spectator such a

general and remote similitude as may be expected in the same common nature affected by external circumstances indefinitely varied. We all enter the world in equal ignorance, gaze round about us on the same objects, and have our first pains and pleasures, our first hopes and fears, our first aversions and desires from the same causes; and though as we proceed farther, life opens wider prospects to our view, and accidental impulses determine us to different paths, yet as every mind, however vigorous or abstracted, is necessitated in its present state of union to receive its informations, and execute its purposes by the intervention of the body, the uniformity of our corporeal nature communicates itself to our intellectual operations; and those whose abilities or knowledge incline them most to deviate from the general round of life, are recalled from their excentricity by the laws of their existence.

If we consider the exercises of the mind, it will be found that in each part of life some particular faculty is more eminently employed. When the treasures of knowledge are first opened before us, while novelty blooms
alike

alike on either hand, and every thing equally unknown and unexamined seems of equal value, the power of the soul is principally exerted in a vivacious and desultory curiosity. She applies by turns to every object, enjoys it for a short time, and flies with equal ardor to another. She delights to catch up loose and unconnected ideas, but starts away from systems and complications which would obstruct the rapidity of her transitions, and detain her long in the same pursuit.

WHEN a number of distinct images are collected by these erratick and hasty surveys, the fancy is busied in arranging them; and combines them into pleasing pictures with more resemblance to the realities of life as experience advances, and new observations rectify the former. While the judgment is yet uninformed and unable to compare the draughts of fiction with their originals, we are delighted with improbable adventures, impracticable virtues, and inimitable characters: But in proportion, as we have more opportunities of acquainting ourselves with living nature, we are sooner disgusted with copies in which there appears no resemblance.

We first discard absurdity and impossibility, then exact greater and greater degrees of probability, but at last become cold and insensible to the charms of falsehood, however specious, and from the imitation of truth which are never perfect, transfer our affection to truth itself.

Now commences the reign of judgment or reason; we begin to find little pleasure, but in comparing arguments, stating propositions, disentangling perplexities, clearing ambiguities, and deducing consequences. The painted vales of imagination are deserted, and our intellectual activity is exercised in winding through the labyrinths of fallacy, and toiling with firm and cautious steps up the narrow tracks of demonstration. Whatever may lull vigilance, or mislead attention is contemptuously rejected, and every disguise in which error may be concealed, is carefully observed, till by degrees a certain number of incontestable or unsuspected propositions are established, and at last concatenated into arguments, or compacted into systems.

At length weariness succeeds to labour, and the mind lies at ease in the contemplation of her own attainments without any desire of new conquests or excursions. This is the age of recollection and narrative; the opinions are settled, and the avenues of apprehension shut against any new intelligence; the days that are to follow must pass in the inculcation of precepts already collected, and assertion of tenets already received; nothing is henceforward so odious as opposition, so insolent as doubt, or so dangerous as novelty.

In like manner the passions usurp the separate command of the successive periods of life. To the happiness of our first years nothing more seems necessary than freedom from restraint: Every man may remember that if he was left to himself, and indulged in the disposal of his own time, he was once content without the superaddition of any actual pleasure. The new world is itself a banquet, and till we have exhausted the freshness of life, we have always about us sufficient gratifications: The sunshine quickens us to play, and the shade invites us to sleep.

BUT

BUT we soon become unsatisfied with negative felicity, and are solicited by our senses and appetites to more powerful delights, as the taste of him who has satisfied his hunger must be excited by artificial stimulations. The simplicity of natural amusement is now past, and art and contrivance must improve our pleasures; but in time art like nature is exhausted, and the senses can no longer supply the cravings of the intellect.

THE attention is then transferred from pleasure to interest, in which pleasure is perhaps included, though diffused to a wider extent, and protracted through new gradations. Nothing now dances before the eyes but wealth and power, nor rings in the ear but the voice of fame; wealth, to which, however variously denominated, every man at some time or other aspires, power, which all wish to obtain within their circle of action, and fame, which no man, however high or mean, however wise or ignorant, was yet able to despise. Now prudence and foresight exert their influence: No hour is devoted wholly to any present enjoyment, no act or purpose

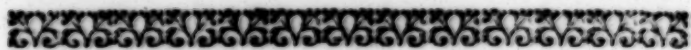
purpose terminates in itself, but every motion is referred to some distant end; the accomplishment of one design begins another, and the ultimate wish is always pushed off to its former distance.

AT length fame is observed to be uncertain, and power to be dangerous; the man whose vigour and alacrity begin to forsake him, by degrees contracts his designs, remits his former multiplicity of pursuits, and extends no longer his regard to any other honour than the reputation of wealth, or any other influence than its power. Avarice is generally the last passion of those lives of which the first part has been squandered in pleasure, and the second devoted to ambition. He that sinks under the fatigue of getting wealth, lulls his age with the milder business of saving it.

I HAVE in this view of life considered men as actuated only by natural desires, and yielding to their own inclinations without regard to superior principles by which the force of external agents may be counteracted, and the temporary prevalence of passions restrained. Nature will indeed always operate, human desires

134 The RAMBLER. N^o. 152.

desires will be always ranging from one object to another; but these motions though very powerful are not resistless; nature may be regulated, and desires governed; and to contend with the predominance of successive passions, to be endangered first by one affection, and then by another, is the condition upon which we are to pass our time, the time of our preparation for that state which shall put an end to experiment, to disappointment, and to change.



NUMB. 152. SATURDAY, *August* 31, 1751.

Tristia mæstum

Vultum verba decent, iratum plena minarum.

HOR.

“IT was the wisdom, says *Seneca*, of
“antient times, to consider what is most
“useful as most illustrious.” If this rule be
observed with regard to works of genius,
scarcely any species of composition deserves
more to be cultivated than the epistolary stile,
since none is of more various or frequent use,
through the whole subordination of human life.

IT has yet happened that among the numerous Writers which our nation has produced,
equal

equal perhaps always in force and genius, and of late in elegance and accuracy to those of any other country, very few have endeavoured to distinguish themselves by the publication of letters, except such as were written in the discharge of publick trusts, and during the transaction of great affairs, which though they afford precedents to the minister, and memorials to the historian, are of no use as examples of the familiar stile, or models of private correspondence.

If it be enquired by foreigners how this deficiency has happened in the literature of a country, where all indulge themselves with so little danger in speaking and writing, may we not without either bigotry or arrogance inform them, that it must be imputed to our contempt of trifles, and our due sense of the dignity of the publick? We do not think it reasonable to fill the world with volumes from which nothing can be learned, nor expect that the employments of the busy, or the amusements of the gay, should give way to narratives of our private affairs, complaints of absence, expressions of fondness, or declarations of fidelity.

A SLIGHT perusal of the innumerable letters by which the wits of *France* have signalized their names, will prove that other nations need not be discouraged from the like attempts by the consciousness of inability; for surely it is not very difficult to aggravate trifling misfortunes, to magnify familiar incidents, repeat adulatory professions, accumulate servile hyperboles, and produce all that can be found in the despicable remains of *Voiture* and *Scarron*.

YET as much of life must be passed in affairs considerable only by their frequent occurrence, and much of the pleasure which our condition allows must be produced by giving elegance to trifles, it is necessary to learn how to become little without becoming mean, to maintain the necessary intercourse of civility, and fill up the vacuities of action by agreeable appearances. It had therefore been of advantage if such of our writers as have excelled in the art of decorating insignificance, had supplied us with a few sallies of innocent gaiety, effusions of honest tenderness, or exclamations of unimportant hurry.

PRECEPT

PRECEPT has generally been posterior to performance. The art of composing works of genius has never been taught but by the example of those who performed it by natural vigour of imagination, and rectitude of judgment. As we have few letters, we have likewise few criticisms upon the epistolary stile. The observations with which *Walsh* has introduced his pages of inanity are such as give him little claim to the rank assigned him by *Dryden* among the criticks. *Letters*, says he, *are intended as resemblances of conversation, and the chief excellencies of conversation are good humour and good breeding.* This remark, equally valuable for its novelty and propriety, he dilates and enforces with an appearance of compleat acquiescence in his own discovery.

No Man was ever in doubt about the moral qualities of a letter. It has been always known that he who endeavours to please must appear pleased, and he who would not provoke rudeness must not practise it. But the question among those who establish rules for an epistolary performance is how gaiety or civility may be properly expressed, as among the criticks
in

in history it is not contested whether truth ought to be preserved, but by what mode of diction it is best adorned.

As letters are written on all subjects, in all states of mind, they cannot be properly reduced to settled rules, or described by any single characteristic; and we may safely disentangle our minds from critical embarrassments, by determining that a letter has no peculiarity but its form, and that nothing is to be refused admission which would be proper in any other method of treating the same subject. The qualities of the epistolary style most frequently required are ease and simplicity, an even flow of unlaboured diction, and an artless arrangement of obvious sentiments. But these directions are no sooner applied to use, than their scantiness and imperfection became evident. Letters are written to the great and to the mean, to the learned and the ignorant, at rest and in distress, in sport and in passion. Nothing can be more improper than ease and laxity of expression, when the importance of the subject impresses solicitude, or the dignity of the person exacts reverence.

THAT

THAT letters should be written with strict conformity to nature is true, because nothing but conformity to nature can make any composition beautiful or just. But it is natural to depart from familiarity of language upon occasions not familiar: Whatever elevates the sentiments will consequently raise the expression; whatever fills us with hope or terror will produce some perturbation of images, and some figurative distortions of phrase. Wherever we are studious to please we are afraid of trusting our first thoughts, and endeavour to recommend our opinion by studied ornaments, accuracy of method, and elegance of stile.

If the personages of the comick scene, be allowed by *Horace* to raise their language in the transports of anger to the turgid vehemence of tragedy, the epistolary writer may likewise without censure comply with the varieties of his matter. If great events are to be related, he may with all the solemnity of an historian, deduce them from their causes, connect them with their concomitants, and trace them to their consequences. If a disputed position is to be established, or a remote
prin-

principle to be investigated, he may detail his reasonings with all the nicety of syllogistick method. If a menace is to be averted, or a benefit implored, he may without any violation of the edicts of criticism call every power of rhetorick to his assistance, and try every inlet at which love or pity enters the heart.

LETTERS that have no other end than the entertainment of the correspondent are more properly regulated by critical precepts, because the matter and stile are equally arbitrary, and rules are more necessary, as there is larger power of choice. In letters of this kind, some conceive art graceful, and others think negligence amiable; some model them by the sonnet, and will allow them no means of delighting but the soft lapse of calm mellifluence; others adjust them by the epigram, and expect pointed sentences and forcible periods. The one party considers exemption from faults as the height of excellence, the other looks upon neglect of excellence as the most disgusting fault; one avoids censure, the other aspires to praise; one is always in danger of insipidity, the other continually on the brink of affectation.

WHEN

N^o. 152. The RAMBLER. 141

WHEN the subject has no intrinsic dignity it must necessarily owe its attractions to artificial embellishments, and may catch at all advantages which the art of writing can supply. He that, like *Pliny*, sends his friend a portion for his daughter, will without *Pliny's* eloquence or address, find means of exciting gratitude, and securing acceptance; but he that has no present to make but a garland, a ribbon, or some petty curiosity, must endeavour to recommend it by his manner of giving it.

THE purpose for which letters are written when no intelligence is communicated, or business transacted, is to preserve in the minds of the absent either love or esteem; to excite love we must impart pleasure, and to raise esteem we must discover abilities. Pleasure will generally be given, as abilities are displayed by scenes of imagery, points of conceit, unexpected sallies and artful compliments. Trifles always require exuberance of ornament; the building which has no strength can be valued only for the grace of its decorations. The pebble must be polished with care, which hopes to be valued as a diamond; and words ought surely to be laboured when they are intended to stand for things.

NUMB.

NUMB. 153. TUESDAY, September 3, 1751.

*Turba Remi sequitur fortunam, ut semper, et odit
Damnatos.* Juv.

To the RAMBLER.

S I R,

THERE are certain occasions on which all apology is rudeness. He that has an unwelcome message to deliver, or unhappy incident to relate, may perhaps give some proof of tenderness and delicacy, by a ceremonial introduction and gradual discovery, because the mind, upon which the weight of sorrow is to fall, gains time for the collection of its powers; but nothing is more absurd than to delay the communication of Pleasure, to torment curiosity by impatience, and to delude hope by anticipation.

I SHALL forbear the arts by which correspondents are generally careful to secure admission, for I have had too many opportunities of remarking the power of vanity and interest, to doubt that I shall be read
by

by you with a disposition to approve, when I declare that my narrative has no other tendency than to illustrate and corroborate your own observations.

I WAS the second son of a gentleman, whose patrimony had been wasted by a long succession of squanderers till he was unable to support any of his children except his heir in the hereditary dignity of idleness. Being therefore sent to school, and obliged to employ that part of life in study which my progenitors had devoted to the hawk and hound, I was in my eighteenth year dispatched with loud praises from my master to the university, without any rural honours or accomplishments. I had never killed a single woodcock, nor partaken one triumph over a conquered fox.

AT the university I continued to enlarge my acquisitions with very little envy of the noisy happiness which my elder brother had the fortune to enjoy, and having obtained my degree at the usual time, retired into the country to consider at leisure to what profession I should confine that application,
which

which had hitherto been dissipated in general knowledge. To deliberate upon a choice which custom and honour forbid to be retracted, is certainly reasonable, yet to let loose the attention equally to the advantages and inconveniencies of every employment is not without danger ; new motives are every moment operating on every side ; and mechanicks have long ago discovered, that contrariety of equal attractions is equivalent to rest.

WHILE I was thus trifling in uncertainty, an old adventurer who had been once the intimate friend of my father arrived from the *Indies* with a large fortune, which he had so much harrassed himself in obtaining, that sickness and infirmity left him no other desire than to die in his native country. His wealth easily procured him an invitation to pass his life with us, and being incapable of any amusement but conversation, he necessarily became familiarised to me, whom he found studious and domestick. Pleased with an opportunity of imparting my knowledge, and eager of any intelligence that might encrease it, I delighted his curiosity with historical narratives, systems of policy, and explication

N^o. 153. The RAMBLER. 145

plications of nature, and gratified his vanity by frequent enquiries after the products of distant countries, and the customs of their inhabitants.

My Brother saw how much I advanced in favour of our guest, who being without heirs was naturally expected to enrich the family of his friend, but neither attempted to alienate me, nor to ingratiate himself. He was indeed little qualified to solicit the affection of an old traveller, for the remissness of his education had left him without any rule of action, but his present humour. He often forsook the old gentleman in the midst of an adventure, because the horn sounded in the court-yard, and would have lost an opportunity, not only of knowing the history, but sharing the wealth of the Mogul, for the trial of a new pointer, or the sight of a horse-race.

It was therefore not long before our new friend declared his intention of bequeathing to me the profits of his commerce, as the only man in the family by whom he could

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expect

expect them to be rationally enjoyed. This distinction drew upon me the envy not only of my brother but my father. As no man is willing to believe that he suffers by his own fault, they imputed the preference which I had obtained to artifice and fraud, adulatory compliances or malignant calumnies. To no purpose did I call upon my patron to attest my innocence, for who will believe what he wishes to be false? The same heat and ignorance which gave me the first advantage confirmed my superiority, they forced their inmate by repeated insults to depart from the house, and I was soon by the same treatment obliged to follow him.

HE chose his residence in the confines of *London*, where rest tranquility and medicine restored him to part of the health which he had lost. I pleased myself with perceiving that I was not likely to obtain an immediate possession of wealth, which no labour of mine had contributed to acquire; and that he who had thus distinguished me, might hope to obtain a few years of chearfulness and plenty, and end his life without a total frustration of those blessings, which, whatever be their real value,

value, he had fought with so much diligence, and purchased with so many vicissitudes of danger and fatigue.

He indeed left me no reason to repine at his recovery, for he was willing to accustom me early to the use of money, and set apart for my annual expences such a revenue as I had scarcely dared to image to myself in the warmest moments of hope and ambition. I can yet congratulate myself that fortune has seen her golden cup once tasted without inebriation. Neither my modesty nor providence were overwhelmed by affluence; my elevation was without insolence, and my expence without profusion. Employing the influence which money always confers, to the enlargement of my views and improvement of my understanding, I mingled sometimes in parties of gaiety, and sometimes in conferences of learning, appeared in every place where instruction was to be found, and imagined that by ranging through all the diversities of life I had acquainted myself fully with human nature, and learned all that was to be known of the ways of men.

IT happened, however, that I soon discovered how much was wanting to the completion of my knowledge, and found that, according to *Seneca's* remark, I had hitherto seen the world but on one side. My patron's confidence in his encrease of strength tempted him to carelessness and irregularity; he caught a fever by riding in the rain, of which he died delirious on the third day. I buried him without any of the heir's affected grief or secret exultation; then preparing to take a legal possession of his fortune, opened his closet, where I found a will, made at his first arrival, by which my father was appointed the chief inheritor of his riches, and nothing was left me but a legacy sufficient to support me in the prosecution of my studies.

I HAD not yet found such charms in prosperity as to continue it by any acts of forgery or injustice, and made haste to inform my father of the riches which had been given him, not by settled kindness, but by the delays of indolence, and the cowardice of age. The hungry family flew like vulturs on their prey,

prey, and soon made my disappointment publick by the tumult of their claims, and the splendour of their sorrow.

It was now my part to consider how I should repair the disappointment which I had suffered. I could not but triumph in my long list of friends which comprised almost every name that power or knowledge entitled to eminence, and in the prospect of the innumerable roads to honour and preferment which I had laid open to myself by the wise use of temporary riches. I believed nothing necessary but that I should continue that acquaintance to which I had been so readily admitted, and which had hitherto been cultivated on both sides with equal ardour.

FULL of these expectations, I one morning ordered a chair, with an intention to make my usual circle of morning visits. Where I first stopped I saw two footmen lol-ling at the door, who told me, without any change of posture or collection of countenance, that their master was at home, and suffered me to open the inner door without assistance. I found my friend standing, and

as I was tattling with my former freedom, was formally entreated to sit down, but did not stay to be favoured with any farther condescensions.

My next experiment was made at the levee of a statesman, who received me with an embrace of tenderness, that he might with more decency publish my change of fortune to the sycophants about him. After he had enjoyed the triumph of condolence, he turned to a wealthy stockjobber, and left me exposed to the scorn of those who had lately courted my notice and solicited my interest.

I was then set down at the door of another, who upon my entrance advised me with great solemnity to think of some settled provision for life. I left him and hurried away to an old friend, who professed himself unsusceptible of any impressions from prosperity or misfortune, and begged that he might see me when he was more at leisure.

OF sixty-seven doors at which I knocked in the first week after my appearance in a
mour-

N^o 153. The RAMBLER. 151

mourning dress, I was denied admission at forty seven; was suffered at thirteen to wait in the outer room till business was dispatched; at four was entertained with a few questions about the weather; at one heard the footmen rated for bringing my name; and at two was informed in the flow of casual conversation how much a man of rank degrades himself by mean company.

My curiosity now led me to try what reception I should find among the ladies, but I found that my patron had carried all my powers of pleasing to the grave. I had formerly been celebrated as a wit, and not perceiving any languor in my imagination, I essayed to revive that gaiety which had hitherto broken out involuntarily before my sentences were finished. My remarks were now heard with a steady countenance, and if a girl happened to give way to habitual merriment, her forwardness was repressed with a frown by her mother or her aunt.

WHEREVER I come I scatter infirmity and disease; every lady whom I meet in the Mall is too weary to walk; all whom I en-

treat to sing are troubled with colds; if I propose cards they are afflicted with the head-ach; if I invite them to the gardens they cannot bear a crowd.

ALL this might be endured; but there is a class of mortals who think my understanding impaired with my fortune; exalt themselves to the dignity of advice, and whenever we happen to meet, presume to prescribe my conduct, regulate my œconomy, and direct my pursuits. Another race equally impertinent and equally despicable, are every moment recommending to me an attention to my interest, and think themselves entitled by their superior prudence to reproach me if I speak or move without regard to profit.

SUCH, Mr. *Rambler*, is the power of wealth, that it commands the ear of greatness and the eye of beauty, gives spirit to the dull, and authority to the timorous, and leaves him from whom it departs, without virtue and without understanding, the sport of caprice, the scoff of insolence, the slave of meanness, and the pupil of ignorance.

I am, &c.

NUMB.

NUMB. 154. SATURDAY, Sept. 7, 1751.

—*Tibi res antiquæ laudis & artis
Aggredior, sanctos ausus recludere fontes.*

VIRG.

THE direction of *Aristotle* to those that study politicks, is, first to examine and understand what has been written by the antients upon government; then to cast their eyes round upon the world, and consider by what causes the prosperity of communities is visibly influenced, and why some are worse and others better administered.

THE same method must be pursued by him who hopes to become eminent in any other part of knowledge. The first task is to search books, the next to contemplate nature. He must first possess himself of the intellectual treasures which the diligence of former ages has accumulated, and then endeavour to increase them by his own collections.

THE mental disease of the present generation, is impatience of study, contempt of the great masters of antient wisdom, and a disposition to rely wholly upon unassisted genius and natural sagacity. The wits of these happy days have discovered a way to fame, which the dull caution of our laborious ancestors durst never attempt; they cut the knots of sophistry which it was formerly the business of years to untie; find themselves enabled to solve all difficulties by sudden irradiations of intelligence, and comprehend long processes of argument by immediate intuition.

MEN who have flattered themselves into this opinion of their own abilities, look down on all who waste their lives over books, as a race of inferior beings condemned by nature to perpetual pupillage, qualified for no higher employment than that of propagating opinions implicitly received, and fruitlessly endeavouring to remedy their barrenness by incessant cultivation, or succour their feebleness by subsidiary strength. They presume that none would be more industrious

Nº. 154. The RAMBLER. 155

dustrious than they if they were not more sensible of deficiencies, and readily conclude, that he who places no confidence in his own powers, owes his modesty only to his weakness.

It is however certain that no estimate is more in danger of erroneous calculations than those by which a man computes the force of his own genius. It generally happens at our entrance into the world, that by the natural attraction of similitude, we associate with men like ourselves young, sprightly, and ignorant, and rate our accomplishments by comparison with theirs; when we have once obtained an acknowledged superiority over our acquaintances, a warm imagination and strong desire easily extend it over the rest of mankind, and if no accident forces us into new emulations, we grow old and die in admiration of ourselves.

VANITY, thus confirmed in her dominion, readily listens to the voice of idleness, and soothes the slumber of life with continual dreams of excellence and greatness. A man elated by confidence in his natural vigour
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of fancy and sagacity of conjecture, soon concludes that he already possesses whatever toil and enquiry can confer. He then listens with eagerness to the wild objections which folly has raised against the common means of improvement; talks of the dark chaos of indigested knowledge; describes the mischievous effects of heterogenous sciences fermenting in the mind; relates the blunders of lettered ignorance; expatiates on the heroick merit of those who deviate from the tracks of prescription, or shake off the shackles of authority; and gives vent to the inflations of his heart by declaring that he owes nothing to pedants and universities.

ALL these pretensions, however confident, are very often vain. The laurels which superficial acuteness gains from triumphs over ignorance unsupported by vivacity, are observed by *Locke* to be lost whenever real learning and rational diligence appear against her; the fallies of gaiety are soon repressed by calm confidence, and the artifices of subtilty are readily detected by those who having carefully studied the question, are not easily confounded or surprised.

BUT

BUT though the contemner of books, had neither been deceived by others nor himself, and was really born with a genius surpassing the ordinary abilities of mankind; yet surely such gifts of providence may be more properly urged as incitements to labour, than encouragements to negligence. He that neglects the culture of ground, naturally fertile, is more shamefully culpable than he whose field would scarcely recompence his husbandry.

CICERO remarks, that not to know what has been transacted in former times is to continue always a child. If we make no use of the labours of our ancestors the world must remain always in the infancy of knowledge. The discoveries of every man must terminate in his own advantage, and the studies of every age be employed on questions which the past generation had discussed and determined. We may with as little reproach make use of the sciences as the manufactures of our ancestors; and it is as rational to live in caves till our own hands have erected a palace, as to reject all knowledge of architecture, which our understandings will not supply.

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To the strongest and quickest mind it is far easier to learn than to invent. The principles of arithmetick and geometry may be comprehended by a close attention in a few days; yet who can flatter himself that the study of a long life would have enabled him to discover them, when he sees them yet unknown to so many nations, whom he cannot suppose less liberally endowed with natural reason, than the *Grecians* or *Egyptians*?

EVERY science was thus far advanced towards perfection, by the emulous diligence of contemporary students, and the gradual discoveries of one age improving on another. Sometimes unexpected flashes of instruction were struck out by the fortuitous collision of happy incidents, or an involuntary concurrence of ideas, in which the philosopher to whom they happened had no other merit than that of knowing their value, and transmitting unclouded to posterity that light which had been kindled by causes out of his power. The happiness of these casual illuminations no man can promise to himself, because no endeavours can procure them;
and

and therefore, whatever be our abilities or application, we must submit to learn from others what perhaps would have lain hid for ever from human penetration, had not some remote enquiry brought it to view; as treasures are thrown up by the ploughman and the digger in the rude exercise of their common occupations.

THE man whose genius qualifies him for great undertakings, must at least be content to learn from books the present state of human knowledge; that he may not ascribe to himself the invention of arts generally known; weary his attention with experiments of which the event has been long registered; and waste, in attempts which have already succeeded or miscarried, that time which might have been spent with usefulness and honour upon new undertakings.

BUT though the study of books is necessary, it is not sufficient to constitute literary eminence. He that wishes to be counted among the benefactors of posterity, must add by his own toil to the acquisitions of his ancestors, and secure his memory from neglect
by

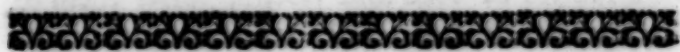
by some valuable improvement. This can only be effected by looking out upon the wastes of the intellectual world, and extending the power of learning over regions yet undisciplined and barbarous; or by surveying more exactly her antient dominions, and driving ignorance from the fortresses and retreats where she skulks undetected and undisturbed. Every science has its difficulties which yet call for solution before we attempt new systems of knowledge; as every country has its forests and marshes, which it would be wise to cultivate and drain, before distant colonies are projected as a necessary discharge of the exuberance of inhabitants.

No man ever yet became great by imitation. Whatever hopes for the veneration of mankind must have invention in the design or the execution; either the effect must itself be new, or the means by which it is produced. Either truths hitherto unknown must be discovered, or those which are already known enforced by stronger evidence, facilitated by clearer method, or elucidated by brighter illustrations.

Fama

Nº. 155. The RAMBLER. 161

Fame cannot spread wide or endure long that is not rooted in nature, and manured by art. That which hopes to resist the blast of malignity, and stand firm against the attacks of time, must contain in itself some original principle of growth. The reputation which arises from the detail or transposition of borrowed sentiments may spread for a while, like ivy on the rind of antiquity, but will be torn away by accident or contempt, and suffered to rot unheeded on the ground.



NUMB. 155. TUESDAY, September, 10, 1751.

— *Steriles transmiffimus annos,
Hæc ævi mihi prima dies, hæc limina vitæ.*

STATIUS.

NO weakness of the human mind has more frequently incurred animadversion, than the negligence with which men overlook their own faults, however flagrant, and the easiness with which they pardon them, however frequently repeated.

It seems generally believed, that, as the eye cannot see itself, the mind has no faculties

ties by which it can contemplate its own state, and that therefore we have not means of becoming acquainted with our real characters; an opinion, which, like innumerable other postulates, an enquirer finds himself inclined to admit upon very little evidence, because it affords a ready solution of many difficulties. It will explain why the greatest abilities frequently fail to promote the happiness of those who possess them; why those who can distinguish with the utmost nicety the boundaries of vice and virtue, suffer them to be confounded in their own conduct; why the active and vigilant resign their affairs implicitly to the management of others; and why the cautious and fearful make hourly approaches towards ruin without one sigh of solicitude or struggle for escape.

WHEN a position seems thus with commodious consequences, who can without regret confess it to be false? Yet it is certain that the pleasure of wantoning in flowery periods, and the pride of swelling with airy declamation has produced a disposition to describe the dominion of the passions as extended beyond the limits that nature has assigned.

Self-love

N^o. 155. The RAMBLER. 163

Self-love is often rather arrogant than blind; it does not hide our faults from ourselves, but persuades us, that they escape the notice of others, and disposes us to resent censures lest we should confess them to be just, and to claim honours that in our opinion we do not merit. We are secretly conscious of defects and vices which we hope to conceal from the publick eye, and please ourselves with the success of innumerable impostures, by which, in reality, no body is deceived.

In proof of the dimness of our internal sight, or the general inability of man to determine rightly concerning his own character, it is common to urge the success of the most absurd and incredible flattery, and the resentment which is always raised by advice, however soft, benevolent, and reasonable. But flattery, if its operation be nearly examined, will be found to owe its acceptance not to our ignorance but knowledge of our failures, and to delight us rather as it consoles our wants than displays our possessions. He that shall solicit the favour of his patron by praising him for qualities which he can find
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in himself, will always be defeated by the more daring panegyrist who enriches him with adscititious excellence, and plunders antiquity, for the decoration of his name. Just praise is only a debt, but flattery is a present. The acknowledgement of those virtues on which conscience congratulates us, is a tribute that we can at any time exact with confidence, but the celebration of those which we only feign, or desire without any vigorous endeavours to attain them, is received as a confession of sovereignty over regions that we never conquered, as a favourable decision of disputable claims, and is more welcome as it is more gratuitous.

ADVICE is generally offensive, not because it lays us open to unexpected regret, or convicts us of any fault which had escaped our notice, but because it shows us that we are known to others as well as to ourselves, that our artifices of hypocrisy have been detected, or that the fear of our resentment has lost its influence; and the officious monitor is persecuted with hatred, not because his accusation is considered as false, but because he assumes that superiority which we are not willing to grant

grant him, and has dared to detect what we desired to conceal.

For this reason advice is commonly ineffectual. If those who follow the call of their desires, without enquiry whither they are going, had deviated ignorantly from the paths of wisdom, and were rushing upon dangers unforeseen, they would readily listen to information that recalls them from their errors, and catch the first alarm by which destruction or infamy is denounced. Few that wander in the wrong way mistake it for the right; they only find it more smooth and flowery, and indulge their own choice rather than approve it, therefore few are persuaded to quit it by admonition or reproof, since it impresses no new conviction nor confers any powers of action or resistance. He that is gravely informed how soon profusion will annihilate his fortune, hears with little advantage what he knew before, and catches at the next occasion of expence, because advice has no force to suppress his vanity. He that is told how certainly intemperance will hurry him to the grave, runs with his usual speed to a new course of luxury, because his
reason

reason is not invigorated, nor his appetite weakened.

THE mischief of flattery is that of suppressing the influence of honest ambition, by an opinion that honour may be gained without the toil of merit; and the benefit of advice arises commonly from the discovery which it affords of the publick suffrages. He that could withstand conscience, is frightened at infamy, and shame prevails when reason was defeated.

As we all know our own faults, and know them generally with many aggravations which human perspicacity cannot discover, there is, perhaps, no man, however hardened by impudence or dissipated by levity, sheltered by hypocrisy, or blasted by disgrace, who does not intend some time to review his conduct, and to regulate the remainder of his life by the laws of virtue. New temptations indeed attack him, new invitations are offered by pleasure and interest, and the hour of reformation is always delayed; every delay gives vice another opportunity of fortifying itself by habit; and the change of

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manners,

manners, though sincerely intended and rationally planned, is referred to the time when some craving passion shall be fully gratified, or some powerful allurements cease its importunity.

THUS procrastination is accumulated on procrastination, and one impediment succeeds another, till age shatters our resolution, or death intercepts the project of amendment. Such is often the end of salutary purposes, after they have long delighted the imagination, and appeased that disquiet which every mind feels from known misconduct, when the attention is not diverted by business or by pleasure.

NOTHING surely can be more unworthy of a reasonable nature, than to continue in a state so opposite to real happiness, as that all the peace of solitude, and felicity of meditation, must arise from resolutions of forsaking it. Yet the world will often afford opportunities of observing men, who pass months and years in a continual war with their own convictions, and are daily dragged by habit or betrayed by passion into practices,

practices, which they closed and opened their eyes with purposes to avoid; purposes which though settled on conviction, the first impulse of momentary desire totally overthrows.

THE influence of custom is indeed such that to conquer it will require the utmost efforts of fortitude and virtue, nor can I think any man more worthy of veneration and renown, than those who have burst the shackles of habitual vice. This victory is more heroick as the objects of guilty gratification are more familiar, and the recurrence of solicitation more frequent. He that from experience of the folly of ambition resigns his offices of power, sets himself free at once from temptation to squander his life in courts, because he cannot regain his former station. He who is enslaved by an amorous passion, may quit his tyrant in disgust, and absence will without the help of reason overcome by degrees the desire of returning. But those appetites to which every place affords their proper object, and which require no preparatory measures or gradual advances, are more tenaciously adhesive; the wish is so near the enjoyment, that compliance often precedes

precedes consideration, and before the powers of reason can be summoned the time for employing them is past.

INDOLENCE is therefore one of the vices from which those whom it once infects are seldom reformed. Every other species of luxury operates upon some appetite that is quickly satiated, and requires some concurrence of art or accident which every place will not supply; but the desire of ease acts equally at all hours, and the longer it is indulged is the more encreased. To do nothing is in every man's power; we can never want an opportunity of omitting duties. The lapse to indolence is soft and imperceptible, because it is only a mere cessation of activity, but the return to diligence is difficult, because it implies a change from rest to motion, from privation to reality.

Facilis descensus Averni:

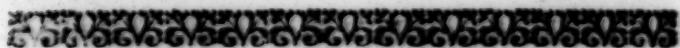
Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis:

*Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad
auras,*

Hoc opus, hic labor est.

It might perhaps be useful to the conquest of all these ensnarers of the mind if at certain

tain stated days life was reviewed. Many things necessary are omitted, because we vainly imagine that they may be always performed, and what cannot be done without pain will for ever be delayed if the time of doing it be left unsettled. No corruption is great but by long negligence, which can scarcely prevail in a mind regularly and frequently awakened by periodical remorse. He that thus breaks his life into parts, will find in himself a desire to distinguish every stage of his existence by some improvement, and delight himself with the approach of the day of recollection, as of the time which is to begin a new series of virtue and felicity.



NUMB. 156. SATURDAY, September 14, 1751.

Nunquam aliud natura, aliud sapientia dicit.

JUV.

EVERY government, say the politicians, is perpetually degenerating towards corruption, from which it must be rescued at certain periods by the resuscitation of its first principles, and the re-establishment of its original constitution. Every animal body, according

According to the methodick physicians, is by the predominance of some exuberant quality continually declining towards disease and death, which must be obviated by a seasonable reduction of the peccant humour to the just equipoise which health requires.

In the same manner the studies of mankind, all at least which not being subject to rigorous demonstration admit the influence of fancy and caprice, are perpetually tending to error and confusion. Of the great principles of truth which the first speculatists discovered, the simplicity is embarrassed by ambitious additions, or the evidence obscured by inaccurate argumentation; and as they descend from one succession of writers to another, like light transmitted from room to room, they lose their strength and splendor, and fade at last in total evanescence.

THE systems of learning therefore must be sometimes reviewed, complications analysed into principles, and knowledge disentangled from opinion. It is not always possible, without a close inspection, to separate the genuine shoots of consequential reasoning, which

grow out of some radical postulate, from the branches which art has engrafted on it. The accidental prescriptions of authority, when time has procured them veneration, are often confounded with the laws of nature, and those rules are supposed coeval with reason, of which the first rise cannot be discovered.

CRITICISM has sometimes permitted fancy to dictate the laws by which fancy ought to be restrained, and fallacy to perplex the principles by which fallacy is to be detected, her superintendance of others has betrayed her to negligence of herself; and like the antient *Scythians*, by extending her conquests over distant regions, she has left her throne vacant to her slaves.

AMONG the laws which the desire of extending authority, or ardour of promoting knowledge, has prompted men of different abilities to prescribe, all which writers have received, had not the same original right to our regard. Some are to be considered as fundamental and indispensable, others only as useful and convenient; some as dictated by reason and necessity, others as enacted by despotick

potick antiquity; some as invincibly supported by their conformity to the order of nature and operations of the intellect; others as formed by accident, or instituted by example, and therefore always liable to dispute and alteration.

THAT many rules have been advanced without consulting nature or reason, we cannot but suspect, when we find it peremptorily decreed by the antient masters, that *only three speaking personages should appear at once upon the stage*, a law which, as the variety and intricacy of modern plays has made it impossible to be observed, we now violate without scruple, and as experience proves without inconvenience.

THE original of this precept was merely accidental. Tragedy was a monody or solitary song in honour of *Bacchus*, improved afterwards into a dialogue by the addition of another speaker; but the antients remembering that the tragedy was at first pronounced only by one, durst not for some time venture beyond two; at last when custom and impunity had made them daring, they extended

their liberty to the admission of three, but restrained themselves by a critical edict from further exorbitance.

By what accident the number of acts was limited to five, I know not that any author has informed us; but certainly it is not determined by any necessity arising either from the nature of action or propriety of exhibition. An act is only the representation of such a part of the business of the play as proceeds in an unbroken tenor, or without any intermediate pause. Nothing is more evident than that of every real, and by consequence of every dramattick action, the intervals may be more or fewer than five; and indeed the rule is upon the *English* stage every day broken in effect, without any other mischief than that which arises from an absurd endeavour to observe it in appearance. When the scene is shifted the act ceases, since some time is necessarily supposed to elapse while the personages of the drama change their place.

WITH no greater right to our obedience have the criticks confined the dramatic action

tion to a certain number of hours. Probability requires that the time of action should approach somewhat nearly to that of exhibition, and those plays will always be thought most happily conducted which croud the greatest variety into the least space. But since it will frequently happen that some delusion must be admitted, I know not where the limits of imagination can be fixed. It is rarely observed that minds not prepossessed by mechanical criticism feel any offence from the extension of the intervals between the acts; nor can I conceive it absurd or impossible, that he who can multiply three hours into twelve or twenty-four, might image with equal ease a greater number.

I KNOW not whether he that professes to regard no other laws than those of nature, will not be inclined to receive tragi-comedy to his protection, whom, however generally condemned, her own laurels have hitherto shaded from the fulminations of criticism. For what is there in the mingled drama which impartial reason can condemn? the connexion of important with trivial incidents, since it is not only common but perpetual in the

world, may surely be allowed upon the stage, which pretends only to be the mirror of life. The impropriety of suppressing passions before we have raised them to the intended agitation, and of diverting the expectation from an event which we keep suspended only to raise it, may be speciously urged. But will not experience shew this objection to be rather subtle than just? is it not certain that the tragic and comic affections have been moved alternately with equal force, and that no plays have oftner filled the eye with tears and the breast with palpitation, than those which are variegated with interludes of mirth?

I do not however think it safe to judge of works of genius merely by the event. These resistless vicissitudes of the heart, this alternate prevalence of merriment and solemnity may sometimes be more properly ascribed to the vigour of the writer than the justness of the design: And instead of vindicating tragi-comedy by the success of *Shakespeare*, we ought perhaps to pay new honours to that transcendent and unbounded genius that could preside over the passions in sport; who

who to actuate the affections, needed not the slow gradation of common means, but could fill the heart with instantaneous jollity or sorrow, and vary our disposition as he changed his scenes. Perhaps the effects even of *Shakespear's* poetry might have been yet greater, had he not counter-acted himself; and we might have been more interested in the distresses of his heroes had we not been so frequently diverted by the jokes of his buffoons.

THERE are other rules more fixed and obligatory. It is necessary that of every play the chief action should be single; for since a play represents some transaction, through its regular maturation to its final event, two actions equally important must evidently constitute two plays.

As the design of tragedy is to instruct by moving the passions, it must always have a hero, a personage apparently and incontestably superior to the rest, upon whom the attention may be fixed and the anxiety suspended. For though if two persons opposing each other with equal abilities and equal

virtue, the auditor will inevitably in time choose his favourite, yet as that choice must be without any cogency of conviction, the hopes or fears which it raises will be faint and languid. Of two heroes acting in confederacy against a common enemy, the virtues or dangers will give little emotion, because each claims our concern with the same right, and the heart lies at rest between equal motives.

It ought to be the first endeavour of a writer to distinguish nature from custom, or that which is established because it is right, from that which is right only because it is established; that he may neither violate essential principles by a desire of novelty, nor debar himself from the attainment of beauties within his view by a needless fear of breaking rules which no literary dictator had authority to enact.

NUMB.

N^o. 157. The RAMBLER. 179

NUMB. 157. TUESDAY, Sept. 17, 1751.

— Οἱ ἀνδρες

ἴσυνται, ἡ ἀνδρῶν μέγα σίναται ἡδ' οὐκ ἔστιν.

HOM.

To the RAMBLER.

S I R,

THOUGH one of your correspondents has presumed to mention with some contempt that pretence of attention and easiness of address, which the polite have long agreed to celebrate and esteem, yet I cannot be persuaded to think them unworthy of regard or cultivation; but am inclined to believe that, as we seldom value rightly what we have never known the misery of wanting, his judgment has been vitiated by his happiness; and that a natural exuberance of assurance has hindered him from discovering its excellence and use.

THIS felicity, whether bestowed by constitution, or obtained by early habitudes, I can scarcely contemplate without envy. I was bred under a man of learning in the country, who having little acquaintance with
gran-

grandeur or pleasure, inculcated nothing but the dignity of knowledge, and the happiness of virtue. By frequency of admonition, and confidence of assertion, he prevailed upon me to believe, that at my first entrance into the world, the splendor of literature would be sufficient to attract reverence, if it was not darkened by corruption. I therefore pursued my studies with incessant industry, and avoided every thing which I had been taught to consider either as vicious or tending to vice, because I regarded guilt and reproach as inseparably united, and thought a tainted reputation the greatest calamity.

At the university, I found no reason for changing my opinion, for though many among my fellow students took the opportunity of a more remiss discipline to gratify their passions; yet virtue preserved her natural superiority, and those who ventured to neglect were not suffered to insult her. The ambition of petty accomplishments found its way into the receptacles of learning, but was observed to seize commonly on those who either neglected the sciences or could not attain them; and I was therefore confirmed

ed in the doctrines of my old master, and thought nothing worthy of my care but the means of gaining or imparting knowledge.

THIS purity of manners, and intenseness of application soon extended my renown beyond my own college, and I was applauded by those, whose opinion I then thought unlikely to deceive me, as a young man that gave uncommon hopes of future eminence. My performances in time reached my native province, and my relations congratulated themselves upon the new honours that were added to their family.

I RETURNED home covered with academical laurels, and fraught with criticism and philosophy. The wit and the scholar excited curiosity, and my acquaintance was solicited by innumerable invitations. To please will always be the wish of benevolence, to be admired must be the constant aim of ambition; and I therefore considered myself as about to receive the reward of my honest labours, and to find the efficacy of learning and of virtue.

THE

THE third day after my arrival I dined at the house of a gentleman who had summoned a multitude of his friends to the annual celebration of his wedding-day. I set forward with great exultation, and thought myself happy, that I had an opportunity of displaying my knowledge to so numerous an assembly. I felt no sense of my own insufficiency, till going up stairs to the dining-room, I heard the mingled roar of obstreperous merriment. I was however disgusted rather than terrified, and went forward without dejection. The whole company rose at my entrance, but when I saw so many eyes fixed at once upon me, I was blasted with a sudden imbecility, I was quelled by some nameless power which I found impossible to be resisted. My sight was dazzled, my cheeks glowed, my perceptions were confounded; I was harrassed by the multitude of eager salutations, and returned the common civilities with hesitation and impropriety; the sense of my own blunders encreased my confusion, and before the exchange of ceremonies allowed me to sit down, I was ready to sink under the oppression of surprise;

N^o 157. The RAMBLER. 183

surprise; my voice grew weak, and my knees trembled.

THE assembly then resumed their places, and I sat with my eyes fixed upon the ground. To the questions of curiosity, or the appeals of complaisance, I could seldom answer but with negative monosyllables, or professions of ignorance; for the subjects on which they conversed, were such as are seldom discussed in books, and were therefore out of my range of knowledge. At length an old clergyman, who rightly conjectured the reason of my conciseness, relieved me by some questions about the present state of natural knowledge, and engaged me by an appearance of doubt and opposition in the explication and defence of the *Newtonian* philosophy.

THE consciousness of my own abilities roused me from my depression, and long familiarity with my subject enabled me to discourse with ease and volubility; but however I might please myself, I found very little added by my demonstrations to the satisfaction of the company; and my antagonist who knew the laws of conversation too well, to
detain

detain their attention long upon an unpleasing topic, after he had commended my acuteness and comprehension, dismissed the controversy, and resigned me to my former insignificance and perplexity.

AFTER dinner, I received from the ladies, who had heard that I was a wit, an invitation to the tea-table. I congratulated myself upon an opportunity to escape from the company, whose gaiety began to be tumultuous, and among whom several hints had been dropped of the uselessness of universities, the folly of book-learning, and the awkwardness of scholars. To the ladies therefore I flew, as to a refuge from clamour, insult and rusticity, but found my heart sink as I approached their apartment, and was again disconcerted by the ceremonies of entrance, and confounded by the necessity of encountering so many eyes at once.

WHEN I sat down I considered that something pretty was always said to ladies, and resolved to recover my credit by some elegant observation or graceful compliment. I applied myself to the recollection of all
that

that I had read or heard in praise of beauty, and endeavoured to accommodate some classical compliment to the present occasion. I sunk into profound meditation, revolved the characters of the heroines of old, considered whatever the poets have sung in their praise, and after having borrowed and invented, chosen and rejected a thousand sentiments, which, if I had uttered them, would not have been understood, I was awakened from my dream of learned gallantry, by the servant who distributed the tea.

THERE are not many situations more incessantly uneasy than that in which the man is placed who is watching an opportunity to speak, without courage to take it when it is offered, and who, tho' he resolves to give a specimen of his abilities, always finds some reason or other for delaying it to the next minute. I was ashamed of silence, yet could find nothing to say of elegance or importance equal to my wishes. The ladies, afraid of my learning, thought themselves not qualified to propose any subject of prattle to a man so famous for dispute, and there was nothing on either side but impatience and vexation.

IN this conflict of shame as I was reassembling my scattered sentiments, and resolving to force my imagination to some sprightlyally, had just found a very happy compliment, by too much attention to my own meditations, I suffered the saucer to drop from my hand. The cup was broken, the lap-dog was scalded, a brocaded petticoat was stained, and the whole assembly was thrown into disorder. I now considered all hopes of reputation as at an end, and while they were consoling and assisting one another, stole away in silence.

THE misadventures of this unhappy day are not yet at an end; I am afraid of meeting the meanest of them that triumphed over me in this state of stupidity and contempt, and feel the same terrors encroaching upon my heart at the sight of those who have once impressed them. Shame, above any other passion, propagates itself. Before those who have seen me confused, I can never appear without new confusion, and the remembrance of the weakness which I formerly discovered, hinders me from acting or speaking with my natural force.

BUT

N^o. 157. The RAMBLER. 187

BUT is this Misery, Mr. *Rambler*, never to cease? have I spent my life in study only to become the sport of the ignorant, and debarred myself from all the common enjoyments of youth to collect ideas which must sleep in silence, and form opinions which I must not divulge? inform me, dear sir, by what means I may rescue my faculties from these shackles of cowardice, how I may rise to a level with my fellow beings, recall myself from this langour of involuntary subjection to the free exertion of my intellects, and add to the power of reasoning the liberty of speech.

I am, Sir, &c.

VERECUNDULUS.

NUMB.

158 The RAMBLER. N^o. 158.

NUMB. 158. SATURDAY, Sept. 21, 1751.

Grammatici certant, et adhuc sub Judice lis est.

HOR.

CRITICISM, though dignified from the earliest ages by the labours of men eminent for knowledge and sagacity, and, since the revival of polite literature, the favourite study of *European* scholars, has not yet attained the certainty and stability of science. The rules hitherto received, are seldom drawn from any settled principle or self-evident postulate, or adapted to the natural and invariable constitution of things; but will be found upon examination the arbitrary edicts of legislators authorised only by themselves, who out of various means by which the same end may be attained, selected such as happened to occur to their own reflection, and then by a law which idleness and timidity were too willing to obey, prohibited new experiments of wit, restrained fancy from the indulgence of her innate inclination to hazard and adventure, and condemned all future flights of genius to pursue the path of the *Meonian* eagle.

THE

THE authority claimed by criticks may be more justly opposed, as it is apparently derived from them whom they endeavour to controul; for we owe few of the rules of writing to the acuteness of those by whom they are delivered, nor have they generally any other merit than that having read the works of great authors with attention, they have observed the arrangement of their matter, or the graces of their expression, and then expected honour and reverence for precepts which they never could have invented: So that practice has introduced rules, rather than rules have directed practice.

FOR this reason the laws of every species of writing have been settled by the ideas of him who first raised it to reputation, without enquiry whether his performances were not yet susceptible of improvement. The excellencies and faults of celebrated writers have been equally recommended to posterity; and so far has blind reverence prevailed, that even the number of their books has been thought worthy of imitation.

THE

THE imagination of the first authors of lyrick poetry was vehement and rapid, and their knowledge various and extensive; living in an age when science had been little cultivated, and when the minds of their auditors not being accustomed to accurate inspection, were easily dazzled by glaring ideas, they applied themselves to instruct, rather by short sentences and striking thoughts than by regular argumentation; and finding attention more successfully excited by sudden fallies and unexpected exclamations, than by the more artful and placid beauties of methodical deduction, they loosed their genius to its own course, passed from one sentiment to another without expressing the intermediate ideas, and roved at large over the ideal world with such lightness and agility that their footsteps are scarcely to be traced.

FROM this accidental peculiarity of the ancient writers the criticks deduce the rules of lyrick poetry, which they have set free from all the laws by which other compositions are confined, and allow to neglect the niceties of transition, to start into remote digressions, and to wander without restraint from one scene of imagery to another.

A WRITER of later times has by the vivacity of his essays, reconciled mankind to the same licentiousness in short dissertations; and he therefore who wants skill to form a plan or diligence to pursue it, needs only entitle his performance an essay, to acquire the right of heaping together the collections of half his life, without order, coherence, or propriety.

IN writing, as in life, faults are endured without disgust when they are associated with transcendent merit, and may be sometimes recommended to weak judgments by the lustre which they obtain from their union with excellence; but it is the business of those who presume to superintend the taste or morals of mankind, to separate illusive combinations, and distinguish that which may be praised from that which can only be excused. As vices never promote happiness, though when overpowered by more active and more numerous virtues they cannot totally destroy it; so confusion and irregularity produce no beauty, though they cannot always obstruct the brightness of genius and learning. To proceed from one truth to another, and connect
distant

distant propositions by regular consequences is the great prerogative of man. Independent and unconnected sentiments flashing upon the mind in quick succession may for a time delight by their novelty, but they differ from systematical reasoning, as single notes from harmony, as glances of lightening from the radiance of the sun.

WHEN rules are thus drawn, rather from precedents than reason, there is danger not only from the faults of an author but from the errors of those who criticise his works; since they may often mislead their pupils by false representations as the *Ciceronians* of the sixteenth century were betrayed into barbarisms by corrupt copies of their darling writer.

It is established at present, that the proemial lines of a poem, in which the general subject is proposed, must always be void of glitter and embellishment. "The first lines of *Paradise Lost*," says *Addison*, "are perhaps as plain, simple and unadorned as any of the whole poem, in which particular the author has conformed himself to the ex-

I „ ample

“ ample of *Homer* and the Precept of *Ho-*
“ *race.*”

THIS observation seems to have been made by an implicit adoption of the common opinion without consideration either of the precept or example. Had *Horace* been consulted, he would have been found to direct only what should be comprised in the proposition, not how it should be expressed, and to have commended *Homer* in opposition to a meaner poet, not for the gradual elevation of his diction, but the judicious expansion of his plan, for displaying unpromised events, not for producing unexpected elegancies.

— *Speciosa dehinc miracula promit*
Antiphaten Scyllamque, Et cum Cyclope Charybdim.

IF the exordial lines of *Homer* be compared with the rest of the poem, they will not appear remarkable for plainness or simplicity, but rather eminently adorned and illuminated.

Ἀνδρά μοι ἔννεπε Μοῦσα πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ
Πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσε·

K

Πηλῶν

Πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἶδεν ἄγρια καὶ νόον ἔχων.
 Πολλὰ δ' ὅγ' ἐν πόσιν πάθει ἄλγεια οὐ καλὰ θυμῶν,
 Ἄρνυμενος ἦν τε Φυχὴν καὶ νότον ἰτάμενος.
 Ἄλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ἰτάμενος ἐρξέσσεαι εἰμένός περ
 Αὐτῶν γὰρ σφείζουσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὅλοισι,
 Νήπιοι δὲ κατὰ βοῦς ἐπιείροισι· ἡλίοιο
 Ἥσθιον· αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλιτο νόστιμον ἦμαρ.
 Τῶν ἀμόθεν γε θεὰ θύγατερ Διὸς εἰπὶ καὶ ἡμῖν.

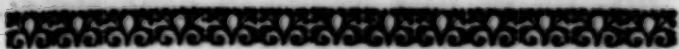
THE first verses of the *Iliad* are in like manner particularly splendid, and the proposition of the *Æneid* closes with dignity and magnificence not often to be found even in the poetry of *Virgil*.

THE Intent of the introduction is to raise expectation and suspend it, something therefore must be discovered and something concealed; and the poet while the fertility of his invention is yet unknown, may properly recommend himself by the grace of his language.

HE that reveals too much or promises too little, he that never irritates the intellectual appetite, or that immediately satiates it, equally defeats his own purpose. It is necessary

N^o. 159. The RAMBLER. 195

fary to the pleasure of the reader, that the events should not be anticipated, and how then can his attention be invited, but by grandeur of expression?



NUMB. 159. TUESDAY, September 24, 1751.

*Sunt verba et voces, quibus hunc lenire dolorem
Possis, et magnam morbi deponere partem. HOR.*

THE imbecillity with which *Verecundulus* complains that the presence of a numerous assembly freezes his faculties, is particularly incident to the studious part of mankind, whose education necessarily secludes them in their earlier years from mingled converse, till at their dismissal from schools and academies they plunge at once into the tumult of the world, and coming forth from the gloom of solitude are overpowered by the blaze of publick life.

It is perhaps kindly provided by nature that, as the feathers and strength of a bird grow together, and her wings are not com-

pleted till she is able to fly, so some proportion should be preserved in the human kind between judgment and courage; the precipitation of inexperience is therefore restrained by shame, and we remain shackled by timidity, till we have learned to speak and act with propriety.

I BELIEVE few can review the days of their youth, without recollecting temptations, which shame, rather than virtue, enabled them to resist; and opinions which, however hastily conceived and negligently examined, however erroneous in their principles, and dangerous in their consequences, they have a thousand times panted to advance at the hazard of contempt and hatred, when they found themselves irresistibly depressed amidst their eagerness and confidence, by a languid anxiety which seized them at the moment of utterance, and still gathered strength from their endeavours to resist it.

It generally happens that assurance keeps an even pace with ability, and the fear of miscarriage, which hinders our first attempts, is gradually dissipated as our skill advances towards

towards certainty of success. That bashfulness therefore which prevents disgrace, that short and temporary shame which secures us from the danger of lasting reproach, cannot be properly counted among our misfortunes.

BASHFULNESS, however it may incommode for a moment, scarcely ever produces evils of long continuance; it may flush the cheek, flutter in the heart, deject the eyes, and enchain the tongue, but its mischiefs soon pass off without remembrance. It may sometimes exclude pleasure, but seldom opens any avenue to sorrow or remorse. It is observed somewhere, that *few have repented of having forbore to speak.*

To excite opposition and inflame malevolence is the unhappy privilege of courage made arrogant by consciousness of strength. No man finds in himself any inclination to attack or oppose him who confesses his superiority by blushing in his presence. Qualities exerted with apparent fearfulness, receive applause from every voice, and support from every hand. Diffidence may check resolution and obstruct performance, but com-

198 The RAMBLER. N^o. 159.

penfates its embarraffments by more important advantages, it conciliates the proud, and foftens the fevere, averts envy from excellence, and censure from mifcarriage.

It may indeed happen that knowledge and virtue remain too long congealed by this frigorisick power, as the principles of vegetation are fometimes obftructed by lingering frofts. He that enters late into a publick ftation, though with all the abilities requifite to the difcharge of his duty, will find his powers at firft impeded by a timidity which he himfelf knows to be vitious, and muft ftruggle long againft dejection and reluctance before he obtains the full command of his own attention, and adds the gracefulness of eafe to the dignity of merit.

For this difeafe of the mind, I know not whether any remedies of much efficacy can be found. To advife a man unaccuftomed to the eyes of multitudes to mount a tribunal without perturbation, to tell him whole life has paffed in the fhades of contemplation, that he muft not be difconcerted or perplexed in receiving and returning the compliments
of

of a splendid assembly, is to advise an inhabitant of *Brazil* or *Sumatra*, not to shiver at an *English* winter, or him who has always lived upon a plain to look from a precipice without emotion. It is to suppose custom instantaneously controlable by reason, and to endeavour to communicate by precept that which only time and habit can bestow.

HE that hopes by philosophy and contemplation alone to fortify himself against that awe which all at their first appearance on the stage of life, must feel from the spectators, will, at the hour of need, be mocked by his resolution; and I doubt whether the preservatives which *Plato* relates *Alcibiades* to have received from *Socrates*, when he was about to speak in publick, proved sufficient to secure him from the powerful fascination.

YET as the effects of time may by art and industry be accelerated or retarded, it cannot be improper to consider by what motives to confidence and firmness this troublesome instinct may be opposed when it exceeds its just proportion, and instead of repressing pe-

tulance and temerity silences eloquence, and debilitates force. Since though it cannot be hoped that anxiety should be immediately dissipated, it may be at least somewhat abated; and the passions will necessarily operate with less violence, when reason rises against them, than while she either slumbers in neutrality, or, mistaking her interest lends them her assistance.

No cause more frequently produces bashfulness than too high an opinion of our own importance. He that imagines an assembly filled with ideas of his genius, panting with expectation, and hushed with attention, easily terrifies himself with the dread of disappointing them, and strains his imagination in pursuit of something worthy of their notice; something that may vindicate the veracity of fame, and show that his reputation was not gained by chance. He considers, that what he shall say or do will never be forgotten; that renown or infamy are suspended upon every syllable, and that nothing ought to fall from him which will not bear the test of time. Under such solicitude, who can wonder that the mind is overwhelmed,

med, and by struggling with attempts above her strength, quickly sinks into languishment and despondency.

THE most useful medicines are often unpleasing to the taste. Those who are oppressed by their own reputation, will perhaps not be comforted by hearing that their cares are unnecessary. But the truth is, that no man is much regarded by the rest of the world, except where the interest of others is involved in his fortune. He that considers how little he dwells upon the condition of others, will learn how little the attention of others is attracted by himself. While we see multitudes passing before us, of whom perhaps not one appears to deserve our notice, or excites our sympathy, we should remember, that we likewise are lost in the same throng, that the eye which happens to glance upon us is turned in a moment on him that follows us, and that the utmost which we can reasonably hope or fear is to fill a vacant hour with prattle and be forgotten.

NUMB. 160. SATURDAY, Sept. 28, 1751.

————— *Inter se convenit urfis.*

Juv.

“**T**HE world,” says *Locke*, “has people of all sorts.” As in the general hurry produced by the superfluities of some, and necessities of others, no man needs to stand still for want of employment, so in the innumerable gradations of ability, and endless varieties of study and inclination, no employment can be vacant for want of a man qualified to discharge it.

SUCH is probably the natural state of the universe, but it is so much deformed by interest and passion, that the benefit of this adaptation of men to things is not always perceived. The folly of those who set their services to sale, inclines them to boast of qualifications which they do not possess, and to attempt business which they do not understand; and they who have the power of assigning to others the task of life, are seldom honest or seldom happy in their nominations.

nations. Patrons are sometimes corrupted by avarice, and sometimes cheated by credulity; sometimes overpowered by resistless solicitation, and sometimes too strongly influenced by the honest prejudices of friendship, or the prevalence of virtuous compassion. For, whatever cool reason may direct, it is not easy for a man of tender and scrupulous goodness to overlook the immediate effect of his own actions by turning his eyes upon their remoter consequences, and to do that which must give present pain, for the sake of obviating some evil yet unfelt, or securing some advantage in time to come. What is distant is in itself obscure, and, when we have no desire to see it, easily escapes our notice or takes such a form as desire or imagination bestows upon it; and he whose hopes and fears are busy in his heart will soon find some method of accommodating futurity to his schemes.

EVERY man might for the same reason in the multitudes that swarm about him, find some kindred mind with which he could unite in confidence and friendship; yet we see many straggling single about the world,

unhappy for want of an associate, and pining with the necessity of confining their sentiments to their own bosoms.

THIS inconvenience arises in like manner from struggles of the will against the understanding. It is not often difficult to find a suitable companion if every man would be content with such as he is qualified to please. But if vanity tempts him to forsake his rank and post himself among those with whom no common interest or mutual pleasure can ever unite him, he must always live in a state of unsocial separation, without tenderness and without trust.

THERE are many natures which can never approach within a certain distance, and which when any irregular motive impels them towards contact, seem to start back from each other by some invincible repulsion. There are others which immediately cohere whenever they come into the reach of mutual attraction, and with very little formality of preparation mingle intimately as soon as they meet. Every man whom either business or curiosity has thrown at large into the

the world, will recollect many instances of fondness and dislike, which have forced themselves upon him without the intervention of his Judgment; of dispositions, to court some and avoid others, when he could assign no reason for the preference, or none adequate to the violence of his passions; of influence that acted instantaneously upon his mind, and which no arguments or persuasions could ever overcome.

AMONG those with whom time and intercourse have made us familiar, we feel our affections divided in different proportions without much regard to moral or intellectual merit. Every man knows some whom he cannot induce himself to trust, though he has no reason to suspect that they would betray him; those to whom he cannot complain though he never observed them to want compassion; those in whose presence he never can be gay though excited by a thousand invitations to mirth and freedom; and those from whom he cannot be content to receive instruction, though they never insulted his ignorance by contempt or ostentation.

THAT

THAT much regard is to be had to those instincts of kindness and dislike, or that reason should blindly follow them, I am far from intending to inculcate. It is very certain that by indulgence we may give them strength which they have not from nature, and almost every example of ingratitude and treachery proves that by obeying them we may commit our happiness to those who are very unworthy of so great a trust. But it may deserve to be remarked, that since few contend much with their inclinations, it is generally vain to solicit the good will of those whom we perceive thus involuntarily alienated from us; neither knowledge nor virtue will reconcile antipathy, and though officiousness may for a time be admitted, and diligence applauded, they will at last be dismissed with coldness or discouraged by neglect.

SOME have indeed an occult power of stealing upon the affections, of exciting universal benevolence, and disposing every heart to fondness and friendship. But this is a felicity granted only to the favourites of nature.

nature. The greater part of mankind find a different reception from different dispositions ; they sometimes obtain unexpected caresses and distinctions from those whom they never flattered with any uncommon regard, and sometimes exhaust all their arts of pleasing without effect. To these it is necessary to look round with vigilance, and attempt every breast in which they find virtue sufficient for the foundation of friendship ; to enter into the crowd and try whom chance will offer to their notice till they fix on some temper congenial to their own, as the magnet rolled in the dust collects the fragments of its kindred metal from a thousand particles of other substances.

EVERY man must have remarked the facility with which the kindness of others is sometimes gained by those to whom he never could have imparted his own. We are by our occupations, education and habits of life divided almost into different species, which regard one another for the most part with scorn and malignity. Each of these classes of the human race has desires, fears, and conversation, vexations and merriment peculiar to itself ; cares which another cannot feel ; pleasures which he cannot partake ;
and

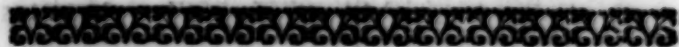
and modes of expressing every sensation which he cannot understand. That frolick which shakes one man with laughter will convulse another with indignation; the strain of jocularity which in one place obtains treats and patronage, would in another be heard with indifference, and in a third with abhorrence.

To raise esteem we must benefit others, to procure love we must please them. *Aristotle*, that great master of human nature observes, that old men do not readily form friendships, because they are not easily susceptible of pleasure. He that can contribute to the hilarity of the vacant hour, or partake with equal gust the favourite amusement, he whose mind is employed on the same objects, and who therefore never harasses the understanding with unaccustomed ideas, will be always welcomed with ardour, and left with regret, unless he destroys those advantages by faults with which peace and security cannot consist.

HE therefore that would gain a patron must adopt his inclination; but the greatest
part

N^o. 161. The RAMBLER. 209

part of human pleasures approach so nearly to the borders of vice, that few who make the delight of others their rule of conduct are able to avoid such compliances as virtue cannot approve; yet certainly he that purchases favour by prostitution mistakes his own interest, since he gains friendship by means, for which his friend, if ever he becomes wise, must scorn him, and for which at last he must scorn himself.



NUMB. 161. TUESDAY, *October 1*, 1751.

Οἳ γὰρ φύλλον γινῆ, τοῖσι καὶ Ἄνθρωποι.

HOM.

Mr. RAMBLER,

S I R,

YOU have formerly observed that curiosity often terminates in barren knowledge, and that the mind is prompted to study and enquiry rather by the uneasiness of ignorance, than the hope of profit. Nothing can be of less importance to any present interest

terest than the fortune of those who have been long lost in the grave, and from whom nothing now can be hoped or feared. Yet to rouse the zeal of a true antiquary little more is necessary than to mention a name which mankind have conspired to forget; he will make his way to remote scenes of action through obscurity and contradiction, as *Tully* sought amidst bushes and brambles the tomb of *Archimedes*.

It is not easy to discover how it concerns him that gathers the produce or receives the rent of an estate, to know through what families the land has passed, who is registered in the conqueror's survey as its possessor, how often it has been forfeited by treason, or how often sold by prodigality. The power or wealth of the present inhabitants of a country cannot be much encreased by an enquiry after the names of those barbarians, who destroyed one another twenty centuries ago, in contests for the shelter of woods or convenience of pasturage. Yet we see that no man can be at rest in the enjoyment of a new purchase till he has learned the history of his grounds from the antient inhabitants
of

of the parish, and that no nation omits to record the actions of their ancestors, however bloody, savage and rapacious.

THE same disposition as different opportunities call it forth, discovers itself in great or in little things. I have always thought it unworthy of a wise man to slumber in total inactivity only because he happens to have no employment equal to his ambition or genius ; it is therefore my custom to apply my attention to the objects before me, and as I cannot think any place wholly unworthy of notice that affords a habitation to a man of letters, I have collected the history and antiquities of the several garrets in which I have resided.

Quantulacunque estis, vos ego magna voco.

MANY of these narratives my industry has been able to extend to a considerable length ; but the woman with whom I now lodge has lived only eighteen months in the house, and can give no account of its antient revolutions ; the plaisterer having, at her entrance, obliterated by his white-wash, all the
smoky

smoky memorials which former tenants had left upon the ceiling, and perhaps drawn the veil of oblivion over politicians, philosophers and poets.

WHEN I first cheapened my lodgings, the landlady told me, that she hoped I was not an author, for the lodgers on the first floor had stipulated that the upper rooms should not be occupied by a noisy trade. I very readily promised to give no disturbance to her family, and soon dispatched a bargain on the usual terms.

I HAD not slept many nights in my new apartment before I began to enquire after my predecessors, and found my landlady, whose imagination is filled chiefly with her own affairs, very ready to give me information.

CURIOSITY, like all other desires, produces pain, as well as pleasure. Before she began her narrative, I had heated my head with expectations of adventures and discoveries, of elegance in disguise and learning in distress, and was somewhat mortified when

when I heard, that the first tenant was a taylor, of whom nothing was remembred but that he complained of his room for want of light ; and, after having lodged in it a month, and paid only a week's rent, pawned a piece of cloth which he was trusted to cut out, and was forced to make a precipitate retreat from this quarter of the town.

THE next was a young woman newly arrived from the country, who lived for five weeks with great regularity, and became by frequent treats very much the favourite of the family, but at last received visits so frequently from a cousin in *Cheapside*, that she brought the reputation of the house into danger, and was therefore dismissed with good advice.

THE room then stood empty for a fortnight ; my landlady began to think that she had judged hardly, and often wished for such another lodger. At last an elderly man of a grave aspect, read the bill, and bargained for the room, at the very first price that was asked. He lived in close retirement, seldom went out till evening, and then

then returned early, sometimes chearful, and at other times dejected. It was remarkable, that whatever he purchased, he never had small money in his pocket, and though cool and temperate on other occasions, was always vehement and stormy till he received his change. He paid his rent with great exactness, and seldom failed once a week to requite my landlady's civility with a supper. At last, such is the fate of human felicity, the house was alarmed at midnight by the constable, who demanded to search the garrets. My landlady assuring him that he had mistaken the door, conducted him up stairs, where he found the tools of a coiner; but the tenant had crawled along the roof to an empty house, and escaped; much to the joy of my landlady, who declares him a very honest man, and wonders why any body should be hanged for making money when such numbers are in want of it. She however confesses that she shall for the future always question the character of those who take her garret without beating down the price.

THE bill was then placed again in the window, and the poor woman was teased for

for seven weeks by innumerable passengers, who obliged her to climb with them every hour up five stories, and then disliked the prospect, hated the noise of a publick street, thought the stairs narrow, objected to a low ceiling, required the walls to be hung with fresher paper, asked questions about the neighbourhood, could not think of living so far from their acquaintance, wished the window had looked to the south rather than the west, told how the door and chimney might have been better disposed, bid her half the price that she asked, or promised to give her earnest the next day, and came no more.

AT last, a short meagre man, in a tarnished waistcoat, desired to see the garret, and when he had stipulated for two long shelves and a larger table, hired it at a low rate. When the affair was compleated, he looked round him with great satisfaction, and repeated some words which the woman did not understand. In two days he brought a great box of books, took possession of his room, and lived very inoffensively, except that he frequently disturbed the inhabitants of the next floor by unseasonable noises. He was
generally

generally in bed at noon, but from evening to midnight he sometimes talked aloud with great vehemence, sometimes stamped as in rage, sometimes threw down his poker, then clattered his chairs, then sat down in deep thought, and again burst out into loud vociferations; sometimes he would sigh as oppressed with misery, and sometimes shake with convulsive laughter. When he encountered any of the family he gave way or bowed, but rarely spoke, except that as he went up stairs he often repeated,

————— Ὅς υπέρτατα δέματα νῆμι,

hard words, to which his neighbours listened so often, that they learned them without understanding them. What was his employment she did not venture to ask him, but at last heard a printer's boy enquire for the author.

My landlady was very often advised to beware of this strange man, who though he was quiet for the present, might perhaps become outrageous in the hot months; but as she was punctually paid, she could not find any sufficient

cient reason for dismissing him, till one night he convinced her by setting fire to his curtains, that it was not safe to have an author for her inmate.

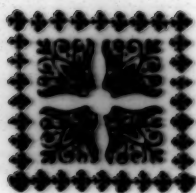
SHE had then for six weeks a succession of tenants, who left the house on Saturday, and instead of paying their rent, stormed at their landlady. At last she took in two sisters, one of whom had spent her little fortune in procuring remedies for a lingering disease, and was now supported and attended by the other: she climbed with difficulty to the apartment, where she languished eight weeks without impatience or lamentation, except for the expence and fatigue which her sister suffered, and then calmly and contentedly expired. The sister followed her to the grave, paid the few debts which they had contracted, wiped away the tears of useless sorrow, and returning to the business of common life, resigned to me the vacant habitation.

SUCH, Mr. *Rambler*, are the changes which have happened in the narrow space
L
where

218 The RAMBLER. N^o. 161.

where my present fortune has fixed my residence. So true is it that amusement and instruction are always at hand for those who have skill and willingness to find them; and so just is the observation of *Juvenal*, that a single house will shew whatever is done or suffered in the world.

I am, Sir, &c.



NUMB.

NUMB. 162. SATURDAY, October 5, 1751.

*Orbus es, & locuples, & Bruto consule natus,
Esse tibi veras credis amicitias?*

*Sunt veræ; sed quas Juvenis, quas pauper
habebas,*

Quis novus est, mortem diligit ille tuam.

MART.

ONE of the complaints uttered by *Milton's Sampson*, in the anguish of blindness, is, that he shall pass his life under the direction of others; that he cannot regulate his conduct by his own knowledge, but must lie at the mercy of those who undertake to guide him.

THERE is no state more contrary to the dignity of wisdom than perpetual and unlimited dependence, in which the understanding lies useless, and every motion is received from external impulse. Reason is the great distinction of human nature, the faculty by which we approach to some degree of association with celestial intelligences; but as the excellence of every power appears only

in its operations, not to have reason, and to have it useless and unemployed, is nearly the same.

SUCH is the weakness of man that the essence of things is seldom so much regarded as external and accidental appendages. A small variation of trivial circumstances, a slight change of form by an artificial dress, or a casual difference of appearance by a new light and situation will conciliate affection or excite abhorrence, and determine us to pursue or to avoid. Every man considers a necessity of compliance with any will but his own, as the lowest state of ignominy and meanness; few are so far lost in cowardice or negligence as not to rouse at the first insult of tyranny, and exert all their force against him who usurps their property, or invades any privilege of speech or action. Yet we often see those who never wanted spirit to repel encroachment or oppose violence, at last by a gradual relaxation of vigilance, delivering up, without capitulation, the fortress which they defended against assault, and laying down unbidden the weapons which they grasped the harder
for

for every attempt to wrest them from their hands. Men eminent for spirit and wisdom often resign themselves to voluntary pupillage, and suffer their lives to be modelled by officious ignorance, and their choice to be regulated by presumptuous stupidity.

THIS unresisting acquiescence in the determination of others may be the consequence of application to some study remote from the beaten track of life, some employment which does not allow leisure for sufficient inspection of those petty affairs, by which nature has decreed a great part of our duration to be filled. To a mind thus withdrawn from common objects it is more eligible to repose on the prudence of another than to be exposed every moment to trivial interruptions. The submission which such confidence requires is paid without pain, because it implies no confession of inferiority. The business from which we withdraw our cognizance, is not above our abilities, but below our notice. We please our pride with the effects of our influence thus weakly exerted, and fancy ourselves placed in a higher orb, from which we regulate subordinate

agents by a slight and distant superintendence. But, whatever vanity or abstraction may suggest, no man can safely do that by others which might be done by himself; he that indulges negligence will quickly become ignorant of his own affairs; and he that trusts without reserve will at last be deceived.

It is however impossible, but that as the attention tends strongly towards one thing it must retire from another; and he that omits the care of domestick business because he is engrossed by enquiries of more importance to mankind, has at least the merit of suffering in a good cause. But there are many who can plead no such extenuation of their folly; who shake off the burthen of their station, not that they may soar with less encumbrance to the heights of knowledge or virtue, but that they may loiter at ease and sleep in quiet; and who select for friendship and confidence not the faithful and the virtuous, but the soft, the civil, and compliant.

THIS openness to flattery is the common disgrace of declining life. When men feel
weakness

weakness encreasing on them, they naturally desire to rest from the struggles of contradiction, the fatigue of reasoning, and the anxiety of circumspection; when they are hourly tormented with pains and diseases, they are unable to bear any new disturbance, and consider all opposition as an addition to misery, of which they feel already more than they can patiently endure. Thus desirous of peace, and thus fearful of pain, the old man seldom enquires after any other qualities in those whom he caresses, than quickness in conjecturing his desires, activity in supplying his wants, dexterity in intercepting complaints or remonstrances before they approach near enough to disturb him, flexibility to his present humour, submission to hasty petulance, and attention to wearisome narrations. By these arts alone many have been able to defeat the claims of kindred and of merit, and to enrich themselves with presents and legacies.

THRASYBULUS inherited a large fortune from his ancestors, and augmented it by a marriage with an heiress, and the revenues of several lucrative employments, which he

discharged with honour and dexterity. He was at last wise enough to consider, that life should not be devoted wholly to accumulation, and therefore resigned his employments, and retiring to his estate, applied himself to the education of his children, and the cultivation of domestick happiness.

He passed several years in this pleasing amusement, and saw his care amply recompensed; his daughters were celebrated for modesty and elegance, and his sons for learning, prudence and spirit. In time the eagerness, with which the neighbouring gentlemen courted his alliance, obliged him to resign his daughters to other families; the vivacity and curiosity of his sons, hurried them out of rural privacy into the open world, from whence they had not soon an inclination to return. This however was no more than he had always hoped; he pleased himself with the success of his schemes, and felt no inconvenience from solitude till an apoplexy deprived him of his wife.

THRASYBULUS had now no companion; and the maladies of encreasing years
having

having taken from him much of the power of procuring amusement for himself, he thought it necessary to procure some inferior friend, who might ease him of his economical solitudes, and divert him by chearful conversation. He soon recollected all these qualities in *Vafer*, a clerk in one of the offices over which he had formerly presided. *Vafer* was invited to visit his old patron, and being by his station necessarily acquainted with the present modes of life, and by constant practice dexterous in business, entertained him with so many novelties, and so readily disentangled his affairs, that his presence was thought the principal constituent of happiness; he was desired to resign his clerkship, and accept a liberal salary in the house of *Thrasylulus*.

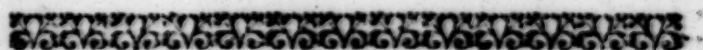
VAFER having always lived in a state of dependance, was well versed in the arts by which favour is obtained, and being long accustomed to repress all starts of resentment and sallies of confidence, could without repugnance or hesitation accommodate himself to every caprice, adopt every opinion, and echo every assertion. He never doubted but

to be convinced, nor attempted opposition but to flatter *Thrasybulus* with the opinion of a victory. By this practice he found his way quickly into the heart of his patron, and having first made himself agreeable, soon became important. His insidious diligence by which the laziness of age was gratified, soon engrossed the management of affairs; and his warm professions of kindness, petty offices of civility, and occasional intercessions, persuaded the tenants to consider him as their friend and benefactor, to consult him in all their schemes, and to entreat his enforcement of their representations of hard years, and his countenance to petitions for abatement of rent.

THRASYBULUS had now banquetted on flattery, till he could no longer bear the harshness of remonstrance or the insipidity of truth. All contrariety to his own opinion shocked him like a violation of some natural right, and all recommendation of his affairs to his own inspection was dreaded by him as a summons to torture. His children were alarmed by the sudden riches of *Vafer*, but their complaints were heard by their father
with

N^o. 163. The RAMBLER. 227

with impatience, and their advice rejected with rage, as the result of a conspiracy against his quiet, and a design to condemn him for their own advantage to groan out his last hours in perplexity and drudgery. The daughters retired with tears in their eyes, but the son continued his importunities till he found his inheritance hazarded by his obstinacy. *Vaſer* having thus triumphed over all their efforts, and continuing to confirm himself in authority and encrease his acquisitions, at the death of his master purchased an estate, and bad defiance to enquiry and justice.



NUMB. 163. TUESDAY, October 8, 1751.

*Mitte superba pati fastidia, spemque caducam
Despice; vive tibi, nam moriere tibi.*

SENECA.

NONE of the cruelties exercised by wealth and power upon indigence and dependance, is more mischievous in its consequences, or more frequently practised with wanton negligence, than the encouragement of expectations which are never to be gratified,

fied, and the elation and depression of the heart by needless vicissitudes of hope and disappointment.

EVERY man is rich or poor, according to the proportion between his desires and enjoyments; any enlargement of wishes is therefore equally destructive to happiness with the diminution of possession, and he that teaches another to long for what he never shall obtain, is no less an enemy to his quiet than if he had robbed him of part of his patrimony.

BUT representations thus refined exhibit no adequate idea of the guilt of pretended friendship; of artifices by which followers are attracted only to decorate the retinue of pomp, and swell the shout of popularity, and to be dismissed with contempt and ignominy when their officiousness is no longer useful, when their leader has succeeded or miscarried, when he is sick of show and weary of noise. While a man, infatuated with the promises of greatness, wastes his hours and days in attendance and solicitation, the honest opportunities of improving his condition pass

pass by without his notice; he neglects to cultivate his own barren soil, because he expects every moment to be placed in regions of spontaneous fertility, and is seldom roused from his delusion, but by the gripe of distress which he cannot resist, and the sense of evils which cannot be remedied.

THE punishment of *Tantalus* in the infernal regions affords a very just image of hungry servility, flattered with the approach of advantage, doomed to lose it before it comes into his reach, always within a few days of felicity, and always sinking back to his former wants.

Καὶ μὲν Τάνταλον ἰστυῖδον χαλὴπ' ἄλγ' ἔχοντα
 Εἰς αὖτο, ἐν λίμνῃ, ἣ δὲ προσέπλαζε γενεῇ.
 Στυγὸν δὲ διψᾶν· πῶς δ' ἐκ εἵχης ἴλισθαι.
 Οὐσάκι γὰρ κῦψαι ὁ γέρον πῶς μανεῖνων,
 Τοσσάχ' ὕδωρ ἀχολέσκειτ' ἀναβροχθὲν· ἀμφὶ δὲ ποσσὶ
 Γαῖα μέλαινα φάνεσκε· καταζήνασκε δὲ δαίμων.
 Δίδρυα δ' ὑψιπύτηλα καὶ ἀχεῖται χεῖ καρπῶν.
 Ὅχραι, καὶ ῥοιαὶ, καὶ μηλῖαι ἀγλαόκαρποι.
 Συκαὶ τέ γλυκεραὶ, καὶ ἰλᾶσαι τηλεθώουσαι.
 Τῶν ὁπότε ἴθυσεν ὁ γέρον ἐπὶ χερσὶ μάσασθαι
 Τὰς δ' ἀνέμῳ ῥέπτασκε πῶς ἐφίεσσι σκυόεσσι.

“ I saw,” says *Homer’s Ulysses*, “ the se-
 “ vere punishment of *Tantalus*. In a lake
 “ whose waters approached to his lips, he
 “ stood burning with thirst, without the
 “ power to drink. Whenever he inclined
 “ his head to the stream some deity com-
 “ manded it to be dry, and the dark earth
 “ appeared at his feet. Around him lofty
 “ trees spread their fruits to view; the pear,
 “ the pomegranate, and the apple, the green
 “ olive, and the luscious fig quivered be-
 “ fore him, which whenever he extended
 “ his hand to seize them, were snatched by
 “ the winds into clouds and obscurity.”

THIS image of misery was perhaps origi-
 nally suggested to some poet by the conduct
 of his patron, by the daily contemplation of
 splendor which he never must partake, by
 fruitless attempts to catch at interdicted hap-
 piness, and by the sudden evanescence of his
 reward when he thought his labours almost
 at an end. To groan with poverty, when
 all about him was opulence, riot, and super-
 fluity, and to find the favours which he had
 long been encouraged to hope, and had long
 endeavoured to deserve, squandered at last on
 nameless

N^o. 163. The RAMBLER. 231

nameless ignorance, was to thirst with water flowing before him, and to see the fruits to which his hunger was hastening, scattered by the wind. Nor can my correspondent, whatever he may have suffered, express with more justness or force the vexations of dependence.

To the RAMBLER.

S I R,

I AM one of those mortals who have been courted and envied as the favourites of the great. Having often gained the prize of composition at the university, I began to hope that I should obtain the same distinction in every other place, and determin'd to forsake the profession to which I was destined by my parents, and in which the interest of my family would have procured me a very advantageous settlement. The pride of wit fluttered in my heart, and when I prepared to leave the college, nothing entered my imagination but honours, caresses, and rewards, riches without labour, and luxury without expence.

I HOW-

I HOWEVER delayed my departure for a time to finish the performance by which I was to draw the first notice of mankind upon me. When it was completed I hurried to *London*, and considered every moment that passed before its publication, as lost in a kind of neutral existence, and cut off from the golden hours of happiness and fame. The piece was at last printed and disseminated by a rapid sale; I wandered from one place of concourse to another, feasted from morning to night on the repetition of my own praises, and enjoyed the various conjectures of criticks, the mistaken candour of my friends, and the impotent malice of my enemies. Some had read the manuscript and rectified its inaccuracies; others had seen it in a state so imperfect, that they could not forbear to wonder at its present excellence; some had conversed with the author at the coffee-house; and others gave hints that they had lent him money.

I KNEW that no performance is so favourably read as that of a writer who suppresses his name, and therefore resolved to remain concealed.

concealed till those by whom literary reputation is established had given their suffrages too publickly to retract them. At length my bookseller informed me that *Aurantius* the standing patron of merit had sent enquiries after me, and invited me to his acquaintance.

THE time, which I had long expected, was now arrived. I went to *Aurantius* with a beating heart, for I looked upon our interview as the critical moment of my destiny. I was received with civilities, which my academick rudeness made me unable to repay, but, when I had recovered from my confusion, I prosecuted the conversation with such liveliness and propriety, that I confirmed my new friend in his esteem of my abilities, and was dismissed with the utmost ardour of profession, and raptures of fondness.

I WAS soon summoned to dine with *Aurantius*, who had assembled the most judicious of his friends to partake of the entertainment. Again I exerted my powers of sentiment and expression, and again found every eye sparkling with delight, and every tongue
silent

silent with attention. I now became familiar at the table of *Auranti*us, but could never, in his most private or jocund hours, obtain more from him than general declarations of esteem or endearments of tenderness, which included no particular promise, and therefore conferred no claim. This frigid reserve somewhat disgusted me, and when he complained of three days absence, I took care to inform him with how much importunity of kindness I had been detained by his rival *Pollio*.

AURANTIUS now considered his honour as endangered by the desertion of a wit, and lest I should have an inclination to wander, told me that I could never find a friend more constant or zealous than himself; that indeed he had made no promises, because he hoped to surprise me with advancement, but had been silently promoting my interest, and should continue his good offices, unless he found the kindness of others more desired.

If you, Mr. *Rambler*, have ever ventured your philosophy within the attraction of greatness, you know the force of such language introduced with a smile of gracious tenderness,
and

and impressed at the conclusion with an air of solemn sincerity. From that instant I gave myself up wholly to *Aurantius*, and, as he immediately resumed his former gaiety, expected every morning a summons to some employment of dignity and profit. One month succeeded another, and in defiance of appearances I still fancied myself nearer to my wishes, and continued to dream of success, and wake to disappointment. At last the failure of my little fortune compelled me to abate the finery which I hitherto thought necessary to the company with whom I associated, and the rank to which I should be raised. *Aurantius* from the moment in which he discovered my poverty, considered me as fully in his power, and afterwards rather permitted my attendance than invited it, thought himself at liberty to refuse my visits whenever he had other amusements within reach, and often suffered me to wait without pretending any necessary business. When I was admitted to his table, if any man of rank equal to his own was present, he took occasion to mention my writings and commend my ingenuity, by which he intended to apologize for the confusion of distinctions, and the improper

proper assortment of his company; and often called upon me to entertain his friends with my productions, as a sportsman delights the squires of his neighbourhood with the curvets of his horse, or the obedience of his spaniels.

To compleat my mortification, it was his practice to impose tasks upon me, by requiring me to write upon such subjects as he thought susceptible of ornament and illustration. With these extorted performances he was little satisfied, because he rarely found in them the ideas which his own imagination had suggested, and which he therefore thought more natural than mine.

WHEN the pale of ceremony is broken, rudeness and insult soon enter at the breach. He now found that he might safely harass me with vexation, that he had fixed the shackles of patronage upon me, and that I could neither resist him nor escape. At last, in the eighth year of my servitude, when the clamour of creditors was vehement, and my necessity known to be extreme, he offered me a small office, but hinted his expectations that I should

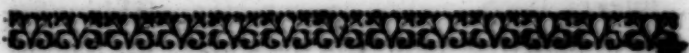
N^o. 164. The RAMBLER. 237

should marry a young woman with whom he had been acquainted.

I WAS not so far depressed by my calamities as to comply with his proposal; but knowing that complaints and expostulations would but gratify his insolence, I turned away with that contempt, with which I shall never want spirit to treat the wretch who can outgo the guilt of a robber without the temptation of his profit, and who lures the credulous and thoughtless to maintain the show of his Levee, and the mirth of his table, at the expence of honour, happiness, and life. I am,

SIR, &c.

LIBERALIS.



NUMB. 164. SATURDAY, October 12, 1751.

———*Vitium, Gaure, Catonis habes.*

MART.

PRAISE and distinction are so pleasing to the pride of man, that a great part of the pain and pleasure of life arises from the gratif-

gratification or disappointment of this incessant wish for superiority, from the success or miscarriage of secret competitions, from victories and defeats of which none are conscious except ourselves.

PROPORTIONATE to the prevalence of this love of praise is the variety of means by which its attainment is attempted. Every man, however hopeless his pretensions may appear to all but himself, has some project by which he hopes to rise to reputation; some art by which he imagines that the notice of the world will be attracted; some quality, good or bad, which discriminates him from the common herd of mortals, and by which others may be persuaded to love, or compelled to fear him. The ascents of honour, however steep, never appear inaccessible; he that despairs to scale the precipices by which valour and learning have conducted their favourites, discovers some by-path, or easier acclivity, which, though it cannot conduct him to the summit, will yet enable him to overlook those with whom he is now contending for eminence; and we seldom require more to the happiness of the present hour,
than

than to surpass him that stands next before us.

As the greater part of humankind speak and act wholly by imitation, most of those who aspire to honour and applause propose to themselves some example which serves as the model of their conduct, and the limit of their hopes. Almost every man if closely examined, will be found to have enlisted himself under some leader whom he expects to conduct him to renown; to have some hero or other, living or dead, perpetually in his view, whose character he endeavours to assume, and whose performances he labours to equal.

WHEN the original is well chosen and judiciously copied, the imitator often arrives at excellence, which he could never have attained without direction; for few are formed with abilities to discover new possibilities of excellence, and to distinguish themselves by means never tried before.

BUT it frequently happens that folly and idleness contrive to gratify pride at a cheaper rate;

ate; that not the qualities which are most illustrious, but those which are of easiest attainment are selected to be copied; and that the honours and rewards which public gratitude has paid to the benefactors of mankind, are expected by wretches who can only imitate them in their vices and defects, or adopt some petty singularities of which those from whom they are borrowed, were secretly ashamed.

No man rises to such height as to become conspicuous, but he is on one side censured by undiscerning malice, which reproaches him for his best actions and slanders his apparent and incontestable excellencies; and idolized on the other side by ignorant admiration, which exalts his faults and follies into virtues. It may be observed, that he by whose intimacy his acquaintances imagine themselves dignified, generally diffuses among them his mien and his habits; and indeed without more vigilance than is generally applied to the regulation of the minuter parts of behaviour, it is not easy when we converse much with one whose general character excites our veneration, to escape all contagion

gion of his peculiarities, even when we do not deliberately think them worthy of our notice, and when they would have excited laughter or disgust had they not been protected by their alliance to nobler qualities, and accidentally conformed with knowledge or with virtue.

THE faults of a man loved or honoured, sometimes steal secretly and imperceptibly upon the wise and virtuous, but by injudicious fondness or thoughtless vanity are often adopted with design and boasted as resemblances of acknowledged merit. There is scarce any failing of mind or body, any error of opinion, or depravity of practice, which, instead of producing shame and discontent, its natural effects, has not at one time or other gladdened vanity with the hopes of praise, and been displayed with ostentatious industry, by those who sought kindred minds among the wits or heroes, and could prove their relation only by similitude of deformity.

IN consequence of this perverse ambition, every habit which reason condemns may be indulged and avowed. When a man is re-

proached for his faults, he may indeed be pardoned though not commended if he endeavours to run for shelter to some celebrated name; but it is not to be suffered that from the retreats to which he fled from infamy, he should issue again with the confidence of conquest, and call upon mankind for praises and rewards. Yet we see men that waste their patrimony in luxury, destroy their health with debauchery, and enervate their minds with idleness, because there have been some whom luxury never could sink into contempt, nor idleness hinder from the praise of genius.

THOSE who have so much perplexed their ideas as to claim reputation from vice or folly, merely because they have been sometimes by uncommon genius or virtue preserved from contempt, will scarcely be reclaimed; but this general inclination of mankind to copy characters in the gross without discrimination, and the force which the recommendation of illustrious examples adds to the allurements of vice, ought to be considered by all whose character excludes them from the shades of secrecy, as incitements to scrupulous caution and universal purity of manners.

ners. No man however enslaved to his appetites, or hurried by his passions, can, while he preserves his intellects unimpaired, please himself with promoting the corruption of others. He whose merit has enlarged his influence, would surely wish to exert it for the benefit of mankind. Yet such will be the effect of his reputation while he suffers himself to indulge any favourite fault, that they who have no hope to reach his excellence, will catch at his failings, and his virtues will be cited to justify the copiers of his vices.

It is particularly the duty of those who consign illustrious names to posterity, to take care lest their readers be misled by ambiguous examples. That writer may be justly condemned as an enemy to goodness who suffers his fondness or his interest to confound right with wrong, or to shelter the faults which even the wisest and the best have committed from that ignominy which guilt ought always to suffer, and with which it should be more deeply stigmatized when dignified by its neighbourhood to uncommon worth, since we shall be in danger of beholding it without abhorrence, unless its turpitude be laid open,

244 The RAMBLER. N^o. 165.

and the eye secured from the deception of surrounding splendor.

NUMB. 165. TUESDAY, *October* 15, 1751.

Ἦν νίος, ἀλλὰ πίνης; νῦν γηρῶν, πλῆσιός εἰμι.

Ὡς μόνος ἐκ πάντων οἰκτρὸς ἐν ἀμφοτέροις,

Ὅς τότε μὲν χρῆσθαι δυνάμην, ὁπότε ἔδε ἐν εἴχον.

Νῦν δ' ὁπότε χρῆσθαι μὴ δύναμαι, τότε ἔχω.

ANTIPHILUS.

To the RAMBLER.

S I R,

THE writers who have undertaken the unpromising task of moderating desire, exert all the power of their eloquence, to shew that happiness is not the lot of man, and have by many arguments and examples proved the instability of every condition by which envy or ambition are excited. They have set before our eyes all the calamities to which we are exposed from the frailty of nature, the influence of accident, or the stratagems of malice; they have terrified greatness

ness with conspiracies, and riches with anxieties, wit with criticism, and beauty with disease.

ALL the force of reason and all the charms of language are indeed necessary to support positions which every man hears with a wish to confute them. Truth finds an easy entrance into the mind when she is introduced by desire, and attended by pleasure; but when she intrudes uncalled and brings only fear and sorrow in her train, the passes of the intellect are barred against her by prejudice and passion; if she sometimes forces her way by the batteries of argument, she seldom long keeps possession of her conquest, but is ejected by some favoured enemy, or at best obtains only a nominal sovereignty without influence and without authority.

THAT life is short we are all convinced, and yet suffer not that conviction to repress our projects or limit our expectations; that life is miserable we all feel, and yet we believe that the time is near when we shall feel it no longer. But to hope happiness and immortality is equally vain. Our state may indeed be more or less imbittered, as our duration

may be more or less contracted; yet the utmost felicity which we can ever attain, will be little better than alleviation of misery, and we shall always feel more pain from our wants than pleasure from our enjoyments. To destroy the effect of all our success, it is not necessary that any signal calamity should fall upon us, that we should be harrassed by implacable persecution, or excruciated by irremediable pains; the brightest hours of prosperity have their clouds, and the stream of life, if it is not ruffled by obstructions, will grow putrid by stagnation.

I WAS descended of an ancient family, but my father resolving not to imitate the folly of his ancestors, who had hitherto left the younger sons as encumbrances on the eldest, destined me to a lucrative profession, and excited my diligence from my earliest years by representations of the penury and meanness in which I must pass my time, if I did not raise myself to independence and plenty by honest application. I heard him with reverence, and endeavoured to obey him; and being careful to lose no opportunity of improvement, was at the usual time in which young men enter the world,

world, well qualified for the exercise of the business which I had chosen.

My eagerness to distinguish myself in publick, and my impatience of the narrow scheme of life to which my indigence confined me, did not suffer me to continue long in the town where I was born, and had always lived, except when the University exacted my attendance. I went away as from a place of confinement, with a resolution to return no more, till I should be able to dazzle with my splendor those who now looked upon me with contempt, to reward those who had paid honours to my dawning merit, and to shew all who had suffered me to glide by them unknown and neglected, how much they mistook their interest in omitting to propitiate a genius like mine.

SUCH were my intentions when I sallied forth into the unknown world in quest of riches and honours, which, with the confidence of unexperienced vivacity, I expected to procure in a very short time; for what could withhold them from industry and knowledge? He that indulges hope will always be disappointed. Reputation indeed I very soon ob-

tained, but as merit is much more cheaply acknowledged than rewarded, I did not find myself yet enriched in proportion to my celebrity. I was therefore soon awakened from my dream of sudden affluence, but however was sufficiently encouraged to perseverance by the gradual encrease of profit, and the prospect which every step of progressive fortune opens to new advantages.

I HAD in time surmounted the obstacles by which envy and competition obstruct the first attempts of a new claimant, and saw my opponents and censurers tacitly confessing their despair of success, by courting my friendship and yielding to my influence. They who once pursued me, were now satisfied to escape from me; and they who had before thought me presumptuous in hoping to overtake them, had now their utmost wish, if they were permitted at no great distance quietly to follow me.

I DID not suffer my success to elate me to insolence, nor made use of my superiority to return the injuries which I had suffered only for endeavouring to gain it. I considered not myself as exempted from the necessity of caution; but remembered that, as no man can
truly

Nº. 165. The RAMBLER. 249

truly think his voyage ended while he is yet floating upon the water, however nearly he may approach the port, so he that is yet at the mercy of the publick can never safely relax his vigilance.

My wants were not madly multiplied as my acquisitions encreased, and the time came at length when I thought myself enabled to gratify all reasonable desires, and when, therefore, I resolved no longer to trust my quiet to chance, but to enjoy that plenty and serenity which I had been hitherto labouring to procure, to enjoy them while I was yet neither crushed by age into infirmity, nor so habituated to a particular manner of life as to be unqualified for new studies or entertainments.

I NOW quitted my profession, and to set myself at once free from all importunities to resume it, changed my residence, and devoted the remaining part of my time to quiet and amusement. Amidst innumerable projects of pleasure which restless idleness incited me to form, and of which most, when they came to the moment of execution, were rejected for

M 5

others

others of no longer continuance, some accident revived in my imagination the pleasing ideas of my native place. It was now in my power to visit those from whom I had been so long absent, in such a manner as was consistent with my former resolution, and I wondered how it could happen that I had so long delayed my own happiness.

FULL of the admiration which I should excite, and the homage which I should receive, I dressed my servants in a more ostentatious Livery, purchased a magnificent chariot, and resolved to dazzle the inhabitants of the little town with an unexpected blaze of greatness.

WHILE the preparations that vanity required were made for my departure, which, as workmen will not easily be hurried beyond their ordinary rate, I thought very tedious, I solaced my impatience with imaging the various censures that my appearance would produce, the hopes which some would feel from my bounty, the terror which my power would strike on others; the awkward respect with which I should be accosted by timorous officiousness; and the distant reverence with
which

which others less familiar to splendor and dignity would be contented to gaze upon me, I deliberated a long time, whether I should immediately descend to a level with my former acquaintances, or make my condescension more grateful by a gentle transition from haughtiness and reserve. At length I determined to forget some of my companions, till they discovered themselves by some indubitable token, and to receive the congratulations of others upon my good fortune with indifference, to show that I always expected what I had now obtained. The acclamations of the populace I purposed to reward with six hogshheads of ale, and a roasted ox, and then recommend to them to return to their work.

At last all the trappings of grandeur were fitted, and I began the journey of triumph, which I could have wished to have ended in the same moment, but my horses felt none of their master's ardour, and I was shaken four days upon rugged roads. I then entered the town, and having graciously let fall the glasses that my person might be seen, passed slowly thro' the street. The noise of the wheels brought the inhabitants to their doors, but I
could

could not perceive that I was known by them. At last I alighted, and my name I suppose was told by my servants, for the barber stepped from the opposite house, and seized me by the hand with honest joy in his countenance, which according to the rule that I had prescribed to myself I repressed with a frigid graciousness. The fellow instead of sinking into dejection turned away with contempt, and left me to consider how the second salutation should be received. The next friend was better treated, for I soon found that I must purchase by civility that regard which I had expected to enforce by insolence.

THERE was yet no smোক of bonfires, no harmony of bells, no shout of crouds, nor riot of joy; the business of the day went forward as before, and after having ordered a splendid supper which no man came to partake, and which my chagrin hindered me from tasting, I went to bed, where the vexation of disappointment overpowered the fatigue of my journey, and kept me from sleep.

IROSE so much humbled by those mortifications, as to enquire after the present state of
the

N^o. 165. The RAMBLER. 253

the town, and found that I had been absent too long to obtain the triumph which had flattered my expectation. Of the friends whose compliments I expected some had long ago moved to distant provinces, some had lost in the maladies of age all sense of another's prosperity, and some had forgotten our former intimacy amidst care and distresses. Of three whom I had resolved to punish for their former Offences by a longer continuance of neglect, one was, by his own industry, raised above my scorn, and two were sheltered from it in the grave. All those whom I loved, feared, or hated, all whose envy or whose kindness I had hopes of contemplating with pleasure, were swept away, and their place was filled by a new generation with other views and other competitions: and among many proofs of the impotence of wealth, I found that it conferred upon me very few distinctions in my native place.

I am,

S I R, &c.

SEROTINUS.

NUMB.

NUMB. 166. SATURDAY, October 19, 1751.

*Pauper eris semper, si pauper es Æmiliane,
Dantur opes nullis nunc nisi divitibus.*

MART.

NO complaint has been more frequently repeated in all ages than that of the neglect of merit associated with poverty, and the difficulty with which valuable or pleasing qualities force themselves into view, when they are obscured by indigence. It has been long observed that native beauty has little power to charm without the ornaments which fortune bestows, and that to want the favour of others is often sufficient to hinder us from obtaining it.

EVERY day discovers that mankind are not yet convinced of their error, or that their conviction is without power to influence their conduct; for poverty still continues to produce contempt, and still obstructs the claims of kindred and of virtue. The eye of wealth is elevated towards higher stations, and seldom descends to examine the actions of those
who

who are placed below the level of its notice, and who in distant regions and lower situations are struggling with distress, or toiling for bread. Among the multitudes overwhelmed with insuperable calamity, it is common to find those whom a very little assistance would enable to support themselves with decency, and who yet cannot obtain from near relations what they see hourly lavished in ostentation, luxury, or frolick.

It is certain that poverty does not easily conciliate affection. He that has been confined from his infancy to the conversation of the lowest classes of mankind, must necessarily want those accomplishments which are the usual means of attracting kindness; and though truth, fortitude, and probity give an indisputable right to reverence and kindness, they will not be distinguished by common eyes unless they are brightened by elegance of manners, but are cast aside like unpolished gems, of which none but the artist knows the intrinsic value, till their asperities are smoothed and their incrustations rubbed away.

THE

THE grossness of vulgar habits obstructs the efficacy of virtue, as impurity and harshness of stile impairs the force of reason, and rugged numbers turn off the mind from artifice of disposition, and vigour of invention. Few have strength of reason sufficient to over-rule the perceptions of sense; and yet fewer have so much curiosity or benevolence as to struggle long against the first impression; he therefore who fails to please in his salutation and address is commonly rejected without farther trial, and never obtains an opportunity of showing his latent excellencies, or essential qualities.

It is indeed not easy to prescribe a successful manner of approach to the distressed or necessitous, whose condition subjects every kind of behaviour equally to miscarriage. He whose confidence of merit incites him to meet without any apparent sense of inferiority the eyes of those who flattered themselves with their own dignity, is considered as an insolent leveller, impatient of the just prerogatives of rank and wealth, eager to usurp the station to which he has no right,
and

and to confound the subordinations of society; and who would contribute to the exaltation of that spirit, which even want and calamity are not able to restrain from rudeness and rebellion?

BUT no better success will commonly be found to attend servility and dejection, which often give pride the confidence to treat them with contempt. A request made with diffidence and timidity is easily denied, because the petitioner himself seems to doubt its fitness.

KINDNESS is generally reciprocal; we are desirous of pleasing others because we receive pleasure from them; but by what means can the man please, whose attention is engrossed by his distresses, and who has no leisure to be officious; whose will is restrained by his necessities, and who has no power to confer benefits; whose temper is perhaps vitiated by misery, and whose understanding is impeded by ignorance?

IT is yet a more offensive discouragement, that the same actions performed by different hands

hands produce different effects, and instead of rating the man by his performances, we rate too frequently the performance by the man. It sometimes happens in the combinations of life, that important services are performed by inferiors; but though their zeal and activity may be paid by pecuniary rewards, they seldom excite that flow of gratitude, or obtain that accumulation of recompence with which all think it their duty to acknowledge the favour of those who descend to their assistance from a higher elevation. To be obliged, is to be in some respect inferior to another; and few willingly indulge the memory of an action which raises one whom they have always been accustomed to think below them, but satisfy themselves with faint praise and penurious payment, and then drive it from their own minds and endeavour to conceal it from the knowledge of others.

It may be always objected to the services of those who can be supposed to want a reward, that they were produced not by kindness but interest; they are therefore, when they are no longer wanted, easily disregarded

N^o. 166. The RAMBLER. 259

as arts of insinuation, or stratagems of selfishness, which it is just and prudent to discountenance. Benefits which are received as gifts from wealth, are exacted as debts from indigence; and he that in a high station is celebrated for his generosity, would in a meaner condition have barely been confessed to have done his duty.

It is scarcely possible for the utmost benevolence to oblige, when exerted under the disadvantages of great inferiority, for by the habitual arrogance of wealth, such expectations are commonly formed as no zeal or industry can satisfy; and what regard can he hope, who has done less than was demanded from him?

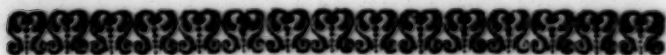
THERE are indeed kindnesses conferred which were never purchased by precedent favours, and there is an affection not arising from gratitude or interest, by which similar natures are attracted to each other, without prospect of any other advantage than the pleasure of exchanging sentiments, and the hope of confirming their esteem of themselves by the approbation of each other.
But

But this spontaneous fondness seldom rises at the sight of poverty, which every one regards with habitual contempt, and of which the applause is no more courted by vanity, than the countenance is solicited by ambition. The most generous and disinterested friendship must be resolved at last into the love of ourselves; he therefore whose reputation or dignity inclines us to consider his esteem as a testimonial of desert, will always find our hearts open to his endearments. We every day see men of eminence followed with all the obsequiousness of dependance, and courted with all the blandishments of flattery, by those who want nothing from them but professions of regard, and who think themselves liberally rewarded by a bow, a smile, or an embrace.

BUT those prejudices which every mind feels more or less in favour of riches, ought like other opinions which only custom and example have impressed upon us, to be in time subjected to reason. We must learn how to separate the real character from extraneous adhesions and casual circumstances, to consider closely him whom we are about to adopt

Nº. 167. The RAMBLER. 261

adopt or to reject; to regard his inclinations as well as his actions; to trace out those virtues which lie torpid in the heart for want of opportunity, and those vices that lurk unseen by the absence of temptation; that when we find worth faintly shooting in the shades of obscurity, we may let in light and sunshine upon it, and ripen barren volition into efficacy and power.



NUMB. 167. TUESDAY, October 22, 1751.

*Candida perpetuo reside concordia lecto,
Tamque pari semper sit Venus æqua jugo.
Diligat ipsa senem quondam, sed et ipsa marito
Tum quoque cum fuerit, non videatur anus.*

MART.

To the RAMBLER.

S I R,

IT is not common to envy those with whom we cannot easily be placed in comparison. Every man sees without malevolence the progress of another in the tracks of life,

life, which he has himself no desire to tread, and hears without inclination to cavils or contradiction the renown of those whose distance will not suffer them to draw the attention of mankind from his own merit. The sailor never thinks it necessary to contest the lawyer's abilities; nor would the *Rambler*, however jealous of his reputation, be much disturbed by the success of rival wits at *Agra* or *Ispahan*.

WE do not therefore ascribe to you any superlative degree of virtue, when we believe that we may inform you of our change of condition without danger of malignant fascination; and that when you read of the marriage of your correspondents *Hymenæus* and *Tranquilla*, you will join your wishes to those of their other friends for the happy event of an union in which caprice and selfishness had so little part.

THERE is at least this reason why we should be less deceived in our connubial hopes than many who enter into the same state, that we have allowed ourselves to form no unreasonable expectations, nor vitiated our
fancies

fancies in the soft hours of courtship, with visions of felicity which human power cannot bestow, or of perfection which human virtue cannot attain. That impartiality with which we endeavoured to inspect the manners of all whom we have known was never so much overpowered by our passion, but that we discovered some faults and weaknesses in each other; and joined our hands in conviction, that as there are advantages to be enjoyed in marriage, there are inconveniences likewise to be endured; and that together with confederate intellects and auxiliary virtues, we must find different opinions and opposite inclinations.

WE however flatter ourselves, for who is not flattered by himself as well as by others on the day of marriage, that we are eminently qualified to give mutual pleasure. Our birth is without any such remarkable disparity as can give either an opportunity of insulting the other with pompous names and splendid alliances, or of calling in upon any domestick controversy the overbearing assistance of powerful relations. Our fortune was equally suitable, so that we meet with-

out any of those obligations which always produce reproach or suspicion of reproach, which, though they may be forgotten in the gaieties of the first month, no delicacy will always suppress, or of which the suppression must be considered as a new favour, to be repaid by tameness and submission, till gratitude takes the place of love, and the desire of pleasing degenerates by degrees into the fear of offending.

THE settlements caused no delay; for we did not trust our affairs to the negotiation of wretches who would have paid their court by multiplying stipulations. *Tranquilla* scorned to detain any part of her fortune from him into whose hands she delivered up her person; and *Hymeneus* thought no act of baseness more criminal than his who enslaves his wife by her own generosity, who by marrying without a jointure condemns her to all the dangers of accident and caprice, and at last boasts his liberality by granting what only the indiscretion of her kindness enabled him to withhold. He therefore received on the common terms the portion which any other woman might have brought him, and reserved
all

all the exuberance of acknowledgment for those excellencies which he has yet been able to discover only in *Tranquilla*.

We did not pass the weeks of courtship like those who consider themselves as taking the last draught of pleasure, and resolve not to quit the bowl without a surfeit, or who know themselves about to set happiness to hazard, and endeavour to lose their sense of danger in the ebriety of perpetual amusement, and whirl round the gulph before they sink. *Hymenæus* often repeated a medical axiom, that *the succours of sickness ought not to be wasted in health*. We know that however our eyes may yet sparkle, and our hearts bound at the presence of each other, the time of listlessness and satiety, of peevishness and discontent must come at last, in which we shall be driven for relief to shews and recreations; that the uniformity of life must be sometimes diversified, and the vacuities of conversation sometimes supplied. We rejoice in the reflection that we have stores of novelty yet unexhausted, which may be opened when repletion shall call for change, and gratifications yet untasted, by which life

when it shall become vapid or bitter may be restored to its former sweetness and sprightliness, and again irritate the appetite, and again sparkle in the cup.

OUR time will probably be less tasteless than that of those whom the authority and avarice of parents unites almost without their consent in their early years, before they have accumulated any fund of reflection, or collected materials for mutual entertainment. Such we have often seen rising in the morning to cards, and retiring in the afternoon to dose, whose happiness was celebrated by their neighbours, because they happened to grow rich by parsimony, and to be kept quiet by insensibility, and agreed to eat and to sleep together.

WE have both mingled with the world, and are therefore no strangers to the faults and virtues, the designs and competitions, the hopes and fears of our contemporaries. We have both amused our leisure with books, and can therefore recount the events of former times, or cite the dictates of antient wisdom.

dom. Every occurrence furnishes us with some hint which one or the other can improve, and if it should happen that memory or imagination fail us, we can retire to no idle or unimproving solitude.

THO' our characters beheld at a distance, exhibit this general resemblance, yet a nearer inspection discovers such a dissimilitude of our habitudes and sentiments, as leaves each some peculiar advantages, and affords that *concordia discors*, that suitable disagreement which is always necessary to intellectual harmony. There may be a total diversity of ideas which admits no participation of the same delight, and there may likewise be such a conformity of notions, as leaves neither any thing to add to the decisions of the other. With such contrariety there can be no peace, with such similarity there can be no pleasure. Our reasonings, though often formed upon different views, terminate generally in the same conclusion. Our thoughts like rivulets issuing from distant springs, are each impregnated in its course with various mixtures, and tinged by infusions unknown to the other, yet at last easily unite into one stream,

and purify themselves by the gentle effervescence of contrary qualities.

THESE benefits we receive in a greater degree as we converse without reserve, because we have nothing to conceal. We have no debts to be paid by imperceptible deductions from avowed expences, no habits to be indulged by the private subserviency of a favoured servant, no private interviews with needy relations, no intelligence with spies placed upon each other. We considered marriage as the most solemn league of perpetual friendship, a state from which artifice and concealment are to be banished for ever, and in which every act of dissimulation is a breach of faith.

The impetuous vivacity of youth, and that ardor of desire, which the first sight of pleasure naturally produces, have long ceased to hurry us into irregularity and vehemence; and experience has shewn us that few gratifications are too valuable to be sacrificed to complaisance. We have thought it convenient to rest from the fatigue of pleasure, and now only continue that course of life into
which

which we had before entered, confirmed in our choice by mutual approbation, supported in our resolution by mutual encouragement, and assisted in our efforts by mutual exhortation.

SUCH, Mr. *Rambler*, is our prospect of life, a prospect which as it is beheld with more attention, seems to open more extensive happiness, and spreads by degrees into the boundless regions of eternity. But if all our prudence has been vain, and we are doomed to give one instance more of the uncertainty of human discernment, we shall comfort ourselves amidst our disappointments, that we were not betrayed but by such delusions as caution could not escape, since we sought happiness only in the arms of virtue. We are,

S I R,

Your humble Servants,

HYMENÆUS,
TRANQUILLA.

NUMB. 168. SATURDAY, October 26, 1751.

Decipit

*Frons prima multos, rara mens intelligit
Quod interiore condidit cura angulo.*

PHÆDRUS.

IT has been observed by *Boileau*, that “ a
“ mean or common thought expressed in
“ pompous diction, generally pleases more
“ than a new or noble sentiment delivered in
“ low and vulgar language; because the
“ number is greater of those whom custom
“ has enabled to judge of words, than whom
“ study has qualified to examine Things.”

THIS solution might satisfy, if such only
were offended with meanness of expression as
are unable to distinguish propriety of thought,
and to separate propositions or images from the
vehicles by which they are conveyed to the
understanding. But this kind of disgust is by
no means confined to the ignorant or super-
ficial; it operates uniformly and universally
upon readers of all classes; every man, how-
ever

ever profound or abstracted, perceives himself irresistibly alienated by low terms, and they who profess the most zealous adherence to truth are forced to admit that she owes part of her charms to her ornaments, and loses much of her power over the soul, when she appears disgraced by a dress uncouth or ill-adjusted.

WE are all offended by low terms, but are not pleased or disgusted alike by the same compositions, because we do not all agree to censure the same terms as low. No word is naturally or intrinsically meaner than another; our notions therefore of words, as of other things arbitrarily and capriciously established, depend wholly upon accident and custom. The cottager thinks those apartments splendid and spacious, which an inhabitant of palaces will despise for their inelegance; and to him who has passed most of his hours with the delicate and polite, many expressions will seem despicable and sordid, which another, equally acute and judicious may hear without offence; but a mean term never fails to displease him to whom it appears mean, as poverty is certainly and invariably despised, though he who

is poor in the opinion of some, may by others be envied for his wealth.

WORDS become low by the occasions to which they are applied, or the general character of them who use them; and the disgust which they produce, arises from the revival of those images with which they are commonly united. Thus if, in the most solemn discourse, a phrase happens to occur which has been successfully employed in some ludicrous narrative, the gravest auditor finds it difficult to refrain from laughter, when they who are not prepossessed by the same accidental association are utterly unable to guess the reason of his merriment. Words which convey ideas of dignity in one age, are banished from elegant writing or conversation in another, because they are in time debased by vulgar mouths, and can be no longer heard without the involuntary recollection of unpleasing images.

WHEN *Macbeth* is confirming himself in his horrid purpose, he breaks out amidst the violence of his emotions into a wish natural to a murderer,

— Come,

————— Come, thick night!
 And pall thee in the dunneſt ſmoke of hell,
 That my keen knife ſee not the wound it
 makes;
 Nor heav'n peep through the blanket of the
 dark,
 To cry, hold, hold! —————

In this paſſage is exerted all the force of poetry, that force which calls new powers into being, which embodies ſentiment, and animates matter; yet prehaps ſcarce any man now peruſes it without ſome diſturbance of his attention from the counteraction of the words to the ideas. What can be more dreadful than to implore the preſence of night, inveſted not in common obſcurity, but in the ſmoke of hell? Yet the efficacy of this invocation is deſtroyed by the inſertion of an epithet now ſeldom heard but in the ſtable, and *dun* night may come or go without any other notice than contempt.

If we ſtart into raptures when ſome hero of the Iliad tells us that *δῶρυ μάλιστα*, his lance rages with eagereſs to deſtroy; if we are

N 5

alarmed

alarmed at the terror of the soldiers commanded by *Cæsar* to hew down the sacred grove, who dreaded, says *Lucan*, lest the axe aimed at the oak should fly back upon the striker.

— *Si robora sacra ferirent,
In sua credebant redituras membra secures,*

we cannot surely but sympathise with the horrors of a wretch about to murder his master, his friend, his benefactor, who suspects that the weapon will refuse its office, and start back from the breast which he is preparing to violate. Yet this sentiment is weakened by the name of an instrument used by butchers and cooks in the meanest employments; we do not immediately conceive that any crime of importance is to be committed with a *knife*, and at last from the long habit of connecting a knife with sordid offices, feel aversion rather than terror.

MACBETH proceeds to wish, in the madness of guilt, that the inspection of heaven may be intercepted, and that he may in the involutions of infernal darkness escape the eye of providence. This is the utmost

extravagance of determined wickedness; yet this is so debased by two unfortunate words, that while I endeavour to impress on my reader the energy of the sentiment, I can scarce check my risibility, when the expression forces itself upon my mind; for who without some relaxation of his gravity can hear of the avengers of guilt *peeping through a Blanket*?

THESE imperfections of diction are less obvious to the reader, as he is less acquainted with the common usages of the age; they are therefore wholly imperceptible to a foreigner, who learns our language only from books, nor will strike a solitary academick so forcibly as a modish lady.

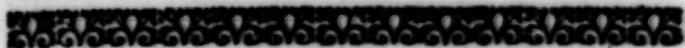
AMONG the numerous requisites that must concur to compleat an author, few are of more importance than an early entrance into the living world. The seeds of knowledge may be planted in solitude, but must be cultivated in publick. Argumentation may be taught in colleges, and theories formed in retirement, but the artifice of embellishment, and the powers of attraction can be gained only by general converse.

AN

AN acquaintance with prevailing customs and fashionable elegance is necessary likewise for other purposes. The injury that noble sentiments suffer from unsuitable language, personal merit may justly fear from rudeness and indelicacy. When the success of *Æneas* depended on the favour of the queen upon whose coasts he was driven, his celestial protectress thought him not sufficiently secured against rejection by his piety or bravery, but decorated him for the interview with preternatural beauty. Whoever desires, what none can reasonably contemn, the favour of mankind, must endeavour to add grace to strength, to make his conversation agreeable as well as useful, and to accomplish himself with the petty qualifications necessary to make the first impressions in his favour. Many complain of neglect who never used any efforts to attract regard. It cannot be expected that the patrons of science or virtue should be solicitous to discover excellencies which they who possess them never display. Few have abilities so much needed by the rest of the world as to be caressed on their own terms; and he that will not condescend to recommend himself by ex-

N^o. 169. The RAMBLER. 277

ternal embellishments, must submit to the fate of just sentiments meanly expressed, and be ridiculed and forgotten before he is understood.



NUMB. 169. TUESDAY, October 29, 1751.

Nec pluteum cædit, nec demarfos sapit ungues.

PERSIUS.

NATURAL historians assert, that whatever is formed for long duration arrives slowly to its maturity. Thus the firmest timber is of tardy growth, and animals generally exceed each other in longevity in proportion to the time between their conception and their birth.

THE same observation may be extended to the offspring of the mind. Hasty compositions, however they please at first by flowery luxuriance, and spread in the sun-shine of temporary favour, can seldom endure the change of seasons, but perish at the first blast of criticism, or frost of neglect. When A-

pellas

pelles was reproached with the paucity of his productions, and the incessant attention with which he retouched his pieces, he condescended to make no other answer than that *he painted for perpetuity.*

No vanity can more justly incur contempt and indignation than that which boasts of negligence and hurry. For who can bear with patience the writer who claims such superiority to the rest of his species, as to imagine that mankind are at leisure for attention to his extemporary sallies, and that posterity will reposit his casual effusions among the treasures of antient wisdom?

MEN have sometimes appeared of such transcendent abilities, that their slightest and most cursory performances excel all that labour and study can enable meaner intellects to compose, as there are some regions of which the spontaneous products cannot be equalled in other soils by care and culture. But it is no less dangerous for any man to place himself in this rank of understanding, and fancy that he is born to be illustrious without labour, than to omit the cares of husbandry,
and

and expect from his grounds the fruits of *Arabia*.

THE greater part of those who congratulate themselves upon their intellectual dignity, and usurp the privileges of genius, are men whom only themselves would ever have marked out as enriched by uncommon liberalities of nature, or entitled to veneration and immortality on easier terms than others. This ardor of confidence is usually found among men, who have not enlarged their notions by books or conversation; but are persuaded by the partiality which we all feel in our own favour, that they have reached the summit of excellence, because they discover none higher than themselves; they acquiesce in the first thoughts that occur, because the scantiness of their knowledge allows them no choice, and the narrowness of their views affords them no glimpse of that sublime idea which human industry has from the first ages been vainly toiling to approach. They see a little, and believe that there is nothing beyond their sphere of vision, as the *Patuecos* of *Spain* who inhabited a small valley, conceived the surrounding mountains to be the boundaries of the world. In proportion as perfection is
more

more distinctly conceived, the pleasure of contemplating our own performances will be lessened; it may therefore be observed, that they who most deserve praise, are often afraid to decide in favour of their own performances; they know how much is still wanting to their completion, and wait with anxiety and terror the determination of the publick. *I please every one else, says Tully, but never satisfy myself.*

It has often been enquired, why, notwithstanding the advances of latter ages in science, and the assistance which the infusion of so many new ideas has given us, we still fall below the antients in the art of composition. Some part of their superiority may be justly ascribed to the graces of their language, from which the most polished of the present *European* tongues, are nothing more than barbarous degenerations. Some advantage they might gain merely by priority, which put them in possession of the most natural sentiments, and left us nothing but servile repetition or forced conceits. But the greater part of their praise seems to have the just reward of modesty and labour. Their sense of
human

Nº 169. The RAMBLER. 281

human weakness confined them commonly to one study, which their knowledge of the extent of every science engaged them to prosecute with indefatigable diligence.

AMONG the writers of antiquity I remember none except *Statius*, who ventures to mention the speedy production of his writings, either as an extenuation of his faults or a proof of his facility. Nor did *Statius*, when he considered himself as a candidate for lasting reputation, think a closer attention unnecessary, but amidst all his pride and indigence, the two great hasteners of modern poems, employed twelve years upon the *Thebaid*, and thinks his claim to renown proportionate to his labour.

*Thebais, multa cruciata lima,
Tentat, audaci fide, Mantuanæ
Gaudia famæ.*

OVID indeed apologizes in his banishment for the imperfection of his letters, but mentions his want of leisure, to polish them as an addition to his calamities, and was so far from imagining revisals and corrections
unneces-

unnecessary, that at his departure from *Rome*, he threw his metamorphoses into the fire, lest he should be disgraced by a book which he could not hope to finish.

It seems not often to have happened, that the same writer aspired to reputation in verse and prose, and of those few that attempted such diversity of excellence, I know not that any one succeeded. Contrary characters they never imagined a single mind able to support, and therefore, no man is recorded to have undertaken more than one kind of dramattick poetry.

WHAT they had written, they did not venture in their first fondness to thrust into the world; but considering the impropriety of doing precipitately that which cannot be recalled, deferred the publication, if not nine years, according to the direction of *Horace*, yet till their fancy was cooled after the raptures of invention, and the glare of novelty had ceased to dazzle the judgment.

THERE were in those days no weekly or diurnal writers, *multa dies, & multa litura,*
much

much time, and many rasures, were considered as indispensable requisites; and that no other method of attaining lasting praise has been yet discovered, may be conjectured from the blotted manuscripts of *Milton* now remaining, and the tardy emission of *Pope's* compositions, delayed more than once till the incidents to which they alluded were forgotten, till his enemies were secure from his satire, and what to an honest mind must be more painful, his friends were deaf to his encomiums.

To him, whose eagerness of praise hurries his productions soon into the light, many imperfections are unavoidable even where the mind furnishes the materials, as well as regulates their disposition, and nothing depends upon search or information. Delay opens new veins of thought, the subject dismissed for a time appears with a new train of dependant images, the accidents of reading or conversation supply new ornaments or allusions, or mere intermission of the fatigue of thinking enables the mind to collect new force, and make new excursions. But all those benefits come too late for him, who when he

was

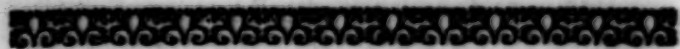
was weary with labour, snatched at the recompence, and gave his performance to his friends and his enemies as soon as impatience and pride persuaded him to conclude it.

ONE of the most pernicious effects of haste, is obscurity. He that teems with a quick succession of ideas, and perceives how one sentiment produces another, easily believes that he can clearly express what he so strongly comprehends; he seldom suspects his thoughts of embarrassment while he preserves in his own memory the series of connection, or his diction of ambiguity while only one sense is present to his mind. Yet if he has been employed on an abstruse or complicated argument, he will find, when he has a while withdrawn his mind, and returns as a new reader to his work, that he has only a conjectural glimpse of his own meaning; and that to explain it to those whom he desires to instruct, he must open his sentiments, disentangle his method, and alter his arrangement.

AUTHORS and lovers always suffer some infatuation, from which only absence can set them free; and every man ought to restore
himself

N^o. 170. The RAMBLER. 285

himself to the full exercise of his judgment, before he does that which he cannot do improperly without injuring his honour and his quiet.



NUMB. 170. SATURDAY, November 2, 1751.

Confiteor; si quid protest delicta fateri.

OVID.

To the RAMBLER.

S I R,

I AM one of those beings, from whom many, that melt at the sight of all other misery, think it meritorious to withhold relief; one whom the rigour of virtuous indignation dooms to suffer without complaint, and perish without regard; and whom I myself have formerly insulted in the pride of reputation and security of innocence.

I AM of a good family, but my father was burthened with more children than he could decently support. A wealthy relation, as he travelled

travelled from *London* to his country seat, condescending to make him a visit, was touched with compassion of his narrow fortune, and resolved to ease him of part of his charge by taking the care of a child upon himself. Distress on one side and ambition on the other, were too powerful for parental fondness, and the little family passed in review before him that he might make his choice. I was then ten years old, and without knowing for what purpose I was called to my great cousin, endeavoured to recommend myself by my best courtesy, sung him my prettiest song, told the last story that I had read, and so much endeared myself by my innocence, that he declared his resolution to adopt me, and to educate me with his own daughters.

My parents felt the common struggles at the thought of parting, and *some natural tears they dropp'd, but wip'd them soon*. They considered, not without that false estimation of the value of wealth which poverty long continued always produces, that I was raised to higher rank than they could give me, and to hopes of more ample fortune than they could bequeath. My mother sold some of her ornaments

naments to dress me in such a manner as might secure me from contempt at my first arrival; and when she dismissed me, pressed me to her bosom with an embrace which I still feel, gave me some precepts of piety which however neglected I have not forgotten, and uttered prayers for my final happiness, of which I have not yet ceased to hope, that they will at last be granted.

My sisters envied my new finery, and seemed not much to regret our separation; my father conducted me to the stage-coach with a kind of chearful tenderness; and in a very short time, I was transported to splendid apartments, and a luxurious table, and grew familiar to show, noise, and gaiety.

IN three years my mother died, having implored a blessing on her family with her last breath. I had little opportunity to indulge a sorrow which there was none to partake with me, and therefore soon ceased to reflect much upon my loss. My father turned all his care upon his other children, whom some fortunate adventures and unexpected legacies enabled him, when he died four years after

after my mother, to leave in a condition above their expectations.

I SHOULD have shared the encrease of his fortune, and had once a portion assigned me in his will; but my cousin assuring him that all care for me was needless, since he had resolved to place me happily in the world, directed him to divide my part amongst my sisters.

THUS I was thrown upon dependance without resource. Being now at an age in which young women are initiated in company, I was no longer to be supported in my former character but at considerable expence; so that partly lest I should waste money, and partly lest my appearance might draw too many compliments and assiduities, I was insensibly degraded from my equality, and enjoyed few privileges above the head servant, but that of receiving no wages.

I FELT every indignity, but knew that resentment would precipitate my fall. I therefore endeavoured to continue my importance by little services and active officiousness,

ness, and for a time preserved myself from neglect, by withdrawing all pretences to competition, and studying to please rather than to shine. But my interest notwithstanding this expedient hourly declined, and my cousin's favourite maid began to exchange respectes with me, and consult me about the alterations of a cast gown.

I WAS now completely depressed, and though I had seen mankind enough to know the necessity of outward chearfulness, I often withdrew to my chamber to vent my grief, or turn my condition in my mind, and examine by what means I might escape from perpetual mortification. At last, my schemes and sorrows were interrupted by a sudden change of my relation's behaviour, who one day took an occasion when we were left together in a room, to bid me suffer myself no longer to be insulted, but assume the place which he always intended me to hold in the family. He assured me, that his wife's preference of her own daughters should never hurt me; and, accompanying his professions with a purse of gold, ordered me to bespeak a rich suit at the mercer's, and to apply pri-

yield to him for money when I wanted it, and inform me that my other friends supplied me, which he would take care to confirm.

By this stratagem, which I did not then understand, he filled me with tenderness and gratitude, convinced me to repose on him as my only support, and produced a necessity of private conversation. He often appointed interviews at the house of an acquaintance, and sometimes called on me with a coach and carried me abroad. My sense of his favour, and the desire of retaining it, disposed me to unlimited complaisance, and though I saw his kindness grow every day more fond, I did not suffer any suspicion to enter my thoughts. At last the wretch took advantage of the familiarity which he enjoyed as my relation, and the submission which he exacted as my benefactor, to complete the ruin of an orphan whom his own promises had made indigent, whom his indulgence had seduced, and his authority subdued.

I know not why it should afford subject of exultation, to overpower on any terms the resolution, or surprise the caution of a girl; but

but of all the boasters that deck themselves in the spoils of innocence and beauty, they surely have the least pretensions to triumph, who submit to owe their success to some casual influence. They neither employ the graces of fancy, nor the force of understanding, in their attempts; they cannot please their vanity with the art of their approaches, the delicacy of their adulations, the elegance of their address, or the efficacy of their eloquence; nor applaud themselves as possessed of any qualities, by which affection is attracted. They surmount no obstacles, they defeat no rivals, but attack only those who cannot resist, and are often content to possess the body without any solicitude to gain the heart.

MANY of these despicable wretches does my present acquaintance with infamy and wickedness enable me to number among the heroes of debauchery. Reptiles whom their own servants would have despised, had they not been their servants, and with whom beggary would have disdained intercourse, had she not been allured by hopes of relief. Many of the beings which are now rioting in taverns or shivering in

in the streets, have been corrupted not by arts of gallantry which stole gradually upon the affections and laid prudence asleep, but by the fear of losing benefits which were never intended, or of incurring resentment which they could not escape; some have been frightened by masters, and some awed by guardians into ruin.

Our crime had its usual consequence, and he soon perceived that I could not long continue in his family. I was distracted at the thought of the reproach which I now believed inevitable. He comforted me with hopes of eluding all discovery, and often upbraided me with the anxiety, which perhaps none but himself saw in my countenance; but at last mingled his assurances of protection and maintenance with menaces of total desertion, if in the moments of perturbation I should suffer his secret to escape, or endeavour to throw on him any part of my infamy.

Thus passed the dismal hours till my retreat could no longer be delayed. It was pretended that my relations had sent for me to a distant

distant county, and I entered upon a state which shall be described in my next letter.

I am,

SIR, &c.

MISELLA.

NUMB. 171. TUESDAY, November 5, 1751.

Tædet cœli convexa tueri.

VIRG.

To the RAMBLER.

SIR,

MISELLA now sits down to continue her narrative. I am convinced that nothing would more powerfully preserve youth from irregularity, or guard inexperience from seduction, than a just description of the condition into which the wanton plunges herself, and therefore hope that my letter may be a sufficient antidote to my example.

AFTER the distraction, hesitation and delays which the timidity of guilt naturally produces,

I was removed to lodgings in a distant part of the town under one of the characters commonly assumed upon such occasions. Here being by my circumstances condemned to solitude, I passed most of my hours in bitterness and anguish. The conversation of the people with whom I was placed, was not at all capable of engaging my attention or dispossessing the reigning ideas. The books which I carried to my retreat were such as heightened my abhorrence of myself; for I was not so far abandoned as to sink voluntarily into corruption, or endeavour to conceal from my own mind the enormity of my crime.

My relation remitted none of his fondness, but visited me so often that I was sometimes afraid lest his assiduity should expose him to suspicion. Whenever he came he found me weeping, and was therefore less delightfully entertained than he expected. After frequent expostulations upon the unreasonableness of my sorrow, and innumerable protestations of everlasting regard, he at last found that I was more affected with the loss of my innocence, than the danger of my fame, and that he might not be disturbed by my remorse, began

began to lull my conscience with the opiates of irreligion. His arguments were such as my course of life has since exposed me often to the necessity of hearing, vulgar, empty and fallacious; yet they at first confounded me by their novelty, filled me with doubt and perplexity, and interrupted that peace which I began to feel from the sincerity of my repentance without substituting any other support. I listened awhile to his impious gabble, but its influence was soon over-powered by natural reason and early education, and the convictions which this new attempt gave me of his baseness compleated my abhorrence. I have heard of barbarians, who, when tempests drive ships upon their coast, decoy them to the rocks that they may plunder their lading, and have always thought that wretches thus merciless in their depredations, ought to be destroyed by a general insurrection of all social beings; yet how light is this guilt to the crime of him, who in the agitations of remorse cuts away the anchor of piety, and when he has drawn aside credulity from the paths of virtue, hides the light of heaven which would direct her to return. I had hitherto considered him as a man equally betrayed with myself by the con-

currence of appetite and opportunity; but I now saw with horror that he was contriving to perpetuate his gratification, and was desirous to fit me to his purpose by complete and radical corruption.

To escape however, was not yet in my power. I could support the expences of my condition, only by the continuance of his favour. He provided all that was necessary, and in a few weeks, congratulated me upon my escape from the danger which we had both expected with so much anxiety. I then began to remind him of his promise to restore me with my fame uninjured to the world. He promised me in general terms, that nothing should be wanting which his power could add to my happiness, but forbore to release me from my confinement. I knew how much my reception in the world depended upon my speedy return, and was therefore outrageously impatient of his delays, which I now perceived to be only artifices of lewdness. He told me at last, with an appearance of sorrow, that all hopes of restoration to my former state were for ever precluded; that

chance

chance had discovered my secret and malice divulged it, and that nothing now remained, but to seek a retreat more private, where curiosity or hatred could never find us.

THE rage, anguish, and resentment, which I felt at this account, are not to be expressed. I was in so much dread of reproach and infamy, which he represented as pursuing me with full cry, that I yielded myself implicitly to his disposal, and was removed with a thousand studied precautions through by-ways and dark passages, to another house, where I harried him with perpetual solicitations for a small annuity, that might enable me to live in the country with obscurity and innocence.

THIS demand he at first evaded with ardent professions, but in time appeared offended at my importunity and distrust; and having one day endeavoured to sooth me with uncommon expressions of tenderness, when he found my discontent immoveable, left me with some inarticulate murmurs of anger. I was pleased that he was at last roused to sensibility, and expecting that at his next visit, he would comply with my request, lived with great

tranquillity upon the money in my hands, and was so much pleased with this pause of persecution, that I did not reflect how much his absence had exceeded the usual intervals, till I was alarmed with the danger of wanting subsistence. I then suddenly contracted my expences, but was unwilling to supplicate for assistance. Necessity, however, soon overcame my modesty or my pride, and I applied to him by a letter, but had no answer. I writ in terms more pressing, but without effect. I then sent an agent to enquire after him, who informed me, that he had quitted his house, and was gone with his family to reside for some time upon his estate in *Ireland*.

HOWEVER shocked at this abrupt departure, I was yet unwilling to believe that he could wholly abandon me, and therefore by the sale of my cloaths I supported myself, expecting that every post would bring me relief. Thus I passed seven months between hope and dejection, in a gradual approach to poverty and distress, emaciated with discontent and bewildered with uncertainty. At last, my husband, after many hints of the necessity

of a new lover, took the opportunity of my absence to search my boxes, and missing some of my apparel, seized the remainder for rent, and led me to the door.

To remonstrate against legal cruelty, was vain; to supplicate obdurate brutality, was hopeless. I went away I knew not whither, and wandered about without any settled purpose, unacquainted with the usual expedients of misery, unqualified for laborious offices, afraid to meet an eye that had seen me before, and hopeless of relief from those who were strangers to my former condition. Night came on in the midst of my distraction, and I still continued to wander till the menaces of the watch obliged me to shelter my self in a covered passage.

NEXT day, I procured a lodging in the backward garret of a mean house, and employed my landlady to enquire for a service. My applications were generally rejected for want of a character. At length, I was received at a draper's; but when it was known to my mistress that I had only one gown, and that of silk, she was of opinion, that I looked

looked like a thief, and without warning, hurried me away. I then tried to support myself by my needle, and by my landlady's recommendation, obtained a little work from a shop, and for three weeks lived without repining; but when my punctuality had gained me so much reputation, that I was trusted to make up a head of some value, one of my fellow lodgers stole the lace, and I was obliged to fly from a prosecution.

THUS driven again into the streets, I lived upon the least that could support me, and at night accommodated myself under pent-houses as well as I could. At length I became absolutely penniless; and having strolled all day without sustenance, was at the close of evening accosted by an elderly man, with an invitation to a tavern. I refused him with hesitation; he seized me by the hand, and drew me into a neighbouring house, where when he saw my face pale with hunger, and my eyes swelling with tears, he spurned me from him, and bad me cant and whine in some other place; he for his part would take care of his pockets.

I

I STILL

I STILL continued to stand in the way, having scarcely strength to walk farther, when another soon addressed me in the same manner. When he saw the same tokens of calamity, he considered that I might be obtained at a cheap rate, and therefore quickly made overtures, which I had no longer firmness to reject. By this man I was maintained four months in penurious wickedness, and then abandoned to my former condition from which I was delivered by another keeper.

In this abject state I have now passed four years, the drudge of extortion and the sport of drunkenness; sometimes the property of one man, and sometimes the common prey of accidental lewdness; at one time tricked up for sale by the mistress of a brothel, at another begging in the streets to be relieved from hunger by wickedness; without any hope in the day but of finding some whom folly or excess may expose to my allurements, and without any reflections at night, but such as guilt and terror impress upon me.

IF

If those who pass their days in plenty and security, could visit for an hour the dismal receptacles to which the prostitute retires from her nocturnal excursions, and see the wretches that lie crowded together, mad with intemperance, ghastly with famine, nauseous with filth, and noisome with disease; it would not be easy for any degree of abhorrence to harden them against compassion, or to repress the desire which they must immediately feel to rescue such numbers of human beings from a state so dreadful.

It is said that in *France* they annually evacuate their streets, and ship their prostitutes and vagabonds to their colonies. If the women that infest this city had the same opportunity of escaping from their miseries, I believe very little force would be necessary; for who among them can dread any change? Many of us indeed are wholly unqualified for any but the most servile employments, and those perhaps would require the care of a magistrate to hinder them from following the same practices in another country; but others are only precluded by infamy from reformation,

tion, and would gladly be delivered on any terms from the necessity of guilt and the tyranny of chance. No place but a populous city can afford opportunities for open prostitution, and where the eye of justice can attend to individuals, those who cannot be made good may be restrained from mischief. For my part I should exult at the privilege of banishment, and think myself happy in any region that should restore me once again to honesty and peace. I am,

SIR, &c.

MISELLA.

NUMB.

NUMB. 172. SATURDAY, November 9, 1751.

*Sæpe rogare soles qualis sim, Prisce, futurus**Si sium lacuplex; sive repente patens.**Quinquam posse putas mores narrare futuros?**Dic mihi, si fias tu leo, qualis eris?*

MART.

NOTHING has been longer observed, than that a change of fortune causes a change of manners; and that it is difficult to conjecture from the conduct of him whom we see in a low condition, how he would act, if wealth and power were put into his hands. But it is generally agreed, that few men are made better by affluence or exaltation; and that the powers of the mind, when they are unbound and expanded by the sunshine of felicity, more frequently luxuriate into follies, than blossom into goodness.

MANY observations have concurred to establish this opinion, and it is not likely soon to become obsolete, for want of new occasions to revive it. The greater part of mankind are corrupt in every condition, and differ in
high

high and in low stations, only as they have more or fewer opportunities of gratifying their desires, or as they are more or less restrained by human censures. Many vitiate their principles in the acquisition of riches; and who can wonder that what is gained by fraud and extortion is enjoyed with tyranny and excess?

YET I am willing to believe that the depravation of the mind by external advantages, though certainly not uncommon, yet approaches not so nearly to universality, as some have asserted in the bitterness of resentment, or heat of declamation.

WHOEVER rises above those who once pleased themselves with equality, will have many malevolent gazers at his eminence. To gain sooner than others that which all pursue with the same ardour, and to which all imagine themselves entitled, will for ever be a crime. When those who started with us in the race of life, leave us so far behind, that we have little hope to overtake them, we revenge our disappointment by remarks on the arts of supplantation by which they
gained

gained the advantage, or on the folly and arrogance with which they possess it. Of them, whose rise we could not hinder, we solace ourselves by prognosticating the fall.

It is impossible for human purity not to betray to an eye thus sharpened by malignity, some stains which lay concealed and unregarded while none thought it their interest to discover them; nor can the most circumspect attention or steady rectitude, escape blame from censors, who have no inclination to approve. Riches therefore perhaps do not so often produce crimes as incite accusers.

THE common charge against those who rise above their original condition, is that of pride. It is certain, that success naturally confirms us in a favourable opinion of our own abilities. Scarce any man is willing to allot to accident, friendship, and a thousand causes which concur in every event without human contrivance or interposition, the part which they may justly claim in his advancement. We rate ourselves by our fortune rather than our virtues, and exorbitant claims are quickly produced by imaginary merit. But
capi-

captiousness and jealousy are likewise easily offended, and to him who studiously looks for an affront, every mode of behaviour will supply it; freedom will be rudeness, and reserve sullenness; mirth will be negligence, and seriousness formality: when he is received with ceremony, distance and respect are inculcated; if he is treated with familiarity, he concludes himself insulted by studied condescensions.

It must however be confessed that as all sudden changes are dangerous, a quick transition from poverty to abundance, can seldom be made with safety. He that has long lived within sight of pleasures, which he could not reach, will need more than common moderation, not to lose his reason in unbounded riot, when they are first put into his power.

EVERY possession is endeared by novelty; every gratification is exaggerated by desire. It is difficult not to estimate what is lately gained above its real value; it is impossible not to annex greater happiness to that condition from which we are unwillingly excluded,

ded, than nature has qualified us to obtain. For this reason, the remote inheritor of an unexpected fortune, may be generally distinguished from those who are enriched in the common course of lineal descent, by his greater haste to enjoy his wealth, by the finery of his dress, the pomp of his equipage, the splendor of his furniture, and the luxury of his table.

A THOUSAND things which familiarity discovers to be of little value, have power for a time to seize the imagination. A *Virginian* king, when the *Europeans* had fixed a lock on his door, was so delighted to find his subjects admitted or excluded with such facility, that it was from morning to evening his whole employment to turn the key. We among whom locks and keys have been longer in use, are inclined to laugh at this *American* amusement; yet I doubt whether this paper will have a single reader that may not apply the story to himself, and recollect some hours of his life in which he has been equally overpowered by the transitory charms of trivial novelty.

SOME

SOME indulgence is due to him whom a happy gale of fortune has suddenly transported into new regions, where unaccustomed lustre dazzles his eyes, and untasted delicacies solicit his appetite. Let him not be considered as lost in hopeless degeneracy, though he for a while forgets the regard due to others, to indulge the contemplation of himself; and in the extravagance of his first raptures expects that his eye should regulate the motions of all that approach him, and his opinion be received as decisive and oracular. His intoxication will give way to time; the madness of joy will fume imperceptibly away; the sense of his insufficiency will soon return; he will remember, that the cooperation of others is necessary to his happiness, and learn to conciliate their regard by reciprocal beneficence.

There is, at least, one consideration which ought to alleviate our censures of the powerful and rich. He that imagines them chargeable with all the guilt and folly of their own actions, is very little acquainted with the world.

Dr

*De l'absence pouvoir vous ignorer ? yvresse
Et de lache flatter la veine eucharistique.*

He from whom much can be hoped or feared, will not find many whom ambition or cowardice will suffer to be sincere, or who cultivate his regard with any other purpose than to comply with all his practices however vicious, and with all his sentiments however absurd. While we live upon the level with the rest of mankind, we are reminded of our duty by the admonitions of friends, and reproaches of enemies; but men who stand in the highest ranks of society, seldom hear of their faults; if by any accident an opprobrious clamour reaches their ears, flattery is always at hand to pour in her opiates to quiet conviction and obtund remorse.

FAVOUR is seldom so certainly gained as by conformity in vice. Virtue can stand without assistance, and considers herself as very little obliged by countenance and approbation; but vice, always timorous, eagerly seeks the shelter of crowds, and support of confederacy. The sycophant therefore, thinks
it

it not necessary to adopt the good qualities of his patron, but employs all his art on his weaknesses and follies, regales his reigning vanity, or stimulates his prevalent desire.

VIRTUE is sufficiently difficult in any circumstances, but the difficulty is increased when reproof and advice are frightened away. In common life, reason and conscience have only the appetites and passions to encounter, but in higher stations, they must oppose artifice and adulation. He therefore, that yields to such temptations, cannot give those who look upon his miscarriage much reason for exultation, since few can justly presume that from the same snare they should have been able to escape.

F I N I S.

It was necessary to adopt the good qualities of
his person, but to avoid all his evil on his
weakness and follies, which he retained
vanity, or ambition, his private defect.

Virtue is naturally difficult in any cir-
cumstances, but the difficulty is increased
when we are in a situation where we are
in constant contact with persons who have
only the appearance and pretence to encounter,
but in higher stations, they must oppose uni-
form and consistent. The character, that is
to be maintained, is not given to those who
look upon the world as a mere stage, but
as a serious business, and they must be
from the time that they should have been
able to change.

F I W I S

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